

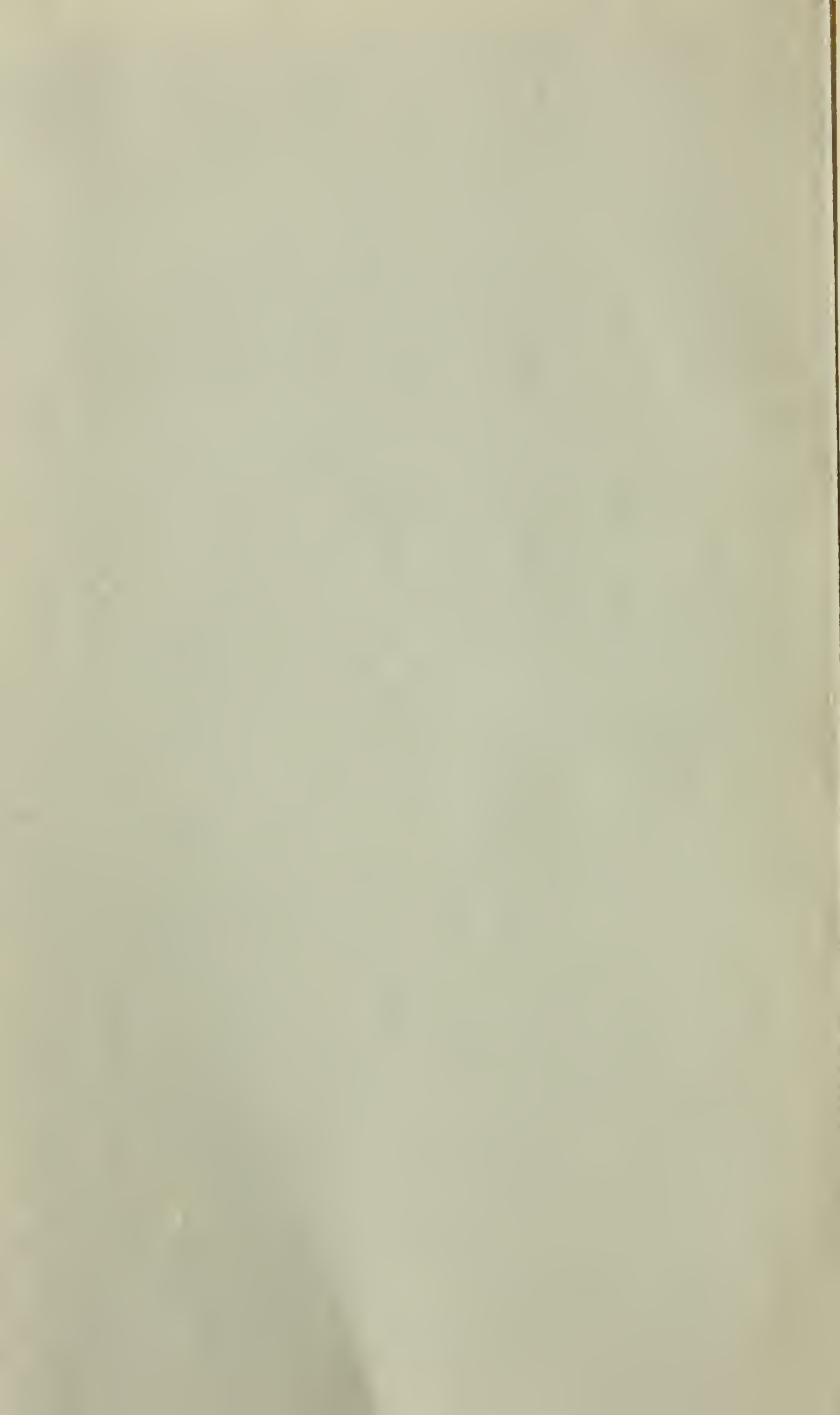




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# THE NEWSPAPER PRESS:

ITS ORIGIN—PROGRESS—AND PRESENT  
POSITION.

BY JAMES GRANT,

AUTHOR OF "RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS," "THE GREAT METROPOLIS," ETC.  
AND LATE EDITOR OF "THE MORNING ADVERTISER."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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## P R E F A C E.

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LORD MACAULAY once remarked, that the only true history of a country is to be found in its Newspapers. Concurring in the justice of the observation, I have endeavoured, in these two Volumes, to record with as much accuracy as possible, the leading incidents which have occurred in connexion with our Newspaper Press from its origin, two centuries and a half ago, till the present time. I am sure the readers of my Work will agree with me, that no one could engage in a more interesting or instructive task, than to trace the gradual development of our English Journalism, from what it was in the early part of the seventeenth century to what it is in 1871.

The two Volumes now presented to the public are exclusively devoted to a historical view of the past Newspaper Press of the metropolis, and to sketches of the existing Daily, Tri-weekly, and Bi-weekly Journals. The plan of my Work would not allow

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me to go farther at present. But the Weekly Papers of London, and the Provincial Press, will form the subject of another volume, which is already in course of preparation ; and it is my intention to follow it up with a fourth volume, embracing the Continental, the American, and the Colonial Newspaper Press.

The Press has before it one of the most glorious Missions in which human agencies ever were employed. Its Mission is to Enlighten, to Civilize, and to Morally Transform the World. These are the grand purposes which Providence has in view in relation to our race, and as it is chiefly through the instrumentality of the Press that they are destined to be accomplished, it would be impossible to conceive a nobler calling than that of the Journalist who, as a fellow-labourer with thousands of others in the same field, faithfully fulfils the functions of his office.

It was my intention to have devoted a considerable amount of space to the Local Press ; but I am obliged to defer the execution of my purpose until the publication of my next volume. The Local Press is a comparatively recent feature in our Newspaper Journalism, and has acquired an importance which entitles it to a special notice. From the

information respecting it which is already in my possession, I feel assured that the part of my Work which will be appropriated to it will not be its least interesting portion.

It has been my aim to make this Work in some measure worthy of its great subject; and should my endeavours be crowned with success, we shall then have, what we have never had before,—a complete “History of the Newspaper Press.”

I cannot conclude this brief Preface, without embracing the opportunity which it affords me, of expressing my grateful appreciation of the courtesy and kindness which I have received from the officers in the Literary Department of the British Museum, while pursuing my inquiries. They greatly facilitated my researches by the readiness with which they procured for me files of old newspapers, and books of distant dates, which in our day are seldom sought for in that invaluable institution.

JAMES GRANT.

41, GUILDFORD STREET, RUSSELL SQUARE,  
LONDON—*October, 1871.*



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# THE NEWSPAPER PRESS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF NEWSPAPERS.

The *Acta Diurna*—The *Gazettas*—Origin of the word “News”—Date of the first English Newspaper—Forgery of the *English Mercurie*—Titles of early Newspapers—General Observations on the Newspapers of the Seventeenth Century—News Letters.

No inconsiderable amount of speculation has been indulged in with relation to the origin of newspapers, now exercising in all parts of the civilized world a mighty moral influence over the minds of men. The general conclusion arrived at is, that it may be traced to the time, some few centuries before the Christian era, when the Roman Empire was approaching its greatest glory. It was then the custom to send from Rome accounts of the progress of the Imperial arms to the generals in command in all parts of the provinces. The chief information contained in these journals, which were called the *Acta Diurna*, was communicated by the generals to the officers under their command. These latter, in turn, imparted to others the information so received; and

in this way the whole of the army became acquainted with any brilliant victory which had been achieved, or any other important occurrence which had taken place. It is right, however, to mention, that these journals or communications from Rome to the provinces were not transmitted on specific days; they were transmitted only when important events took place, with which it was desirable that the army should be made acquainted.

A great deal has been written in relation to the *Acta Diurna* of the old Romans, but much of it, it is to be feared, cannot be received without misgivings as to its accuracy. The best disquisition I have met with on the subject was written by Dr. Johnson, for the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1740, and was transferred to "The Selection of Curious Articles from the *Gentleman's Magazine*," made by Mr. John Walker, Fellow of New College, and published by Longman and Co. in four volumes in 1814. But though there may be much in what is written about the *Acta Diurna* of the old Romans that has more in it of the quality of fiction than the element of fact, there are, on the other hand, some interesting statements which may be relied on. As mentioned by the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the *Acta Diurna*, in addition to military matters, recorded the common occurrences of Rome,—as the trials, punishments, deaths, sacrifices, prodigies, &c., composed under the direction of the magistrates, committed to their care, and laid up with the rest of the records in an edifice called the "Hall of Liberty."

They were, it is added by the same writer, "like all other public papers, easily gained access to." These statements are substantiated by some of the earliest Roman writers. One statement is somewhat remarkable. Tully, in a playful letter to Cœlius, employs the following among other expressions:—"Do you think that I left it in charge with you to send an account of the matches of gladiators, the adjudgments of courts, and such like articles, which, even when I am at Rome, nobody ventures to tell me? From you I expect a political sketch of the Commonwealth, and not Chrestus' newspaper." It will strike the reader as remarkable that the very word "newspaper" should thus have been employed in speaking of the *Acta Diurna* of Rome long before the birth of Christ. Suetonius, too, the friend of Pliny, and author of "The Twelve Cæsars," makes mention of a fact which is confirmatory of the historical statements, that these *Acta Diurna* were journals resembling in their leading features our newspapers; though, of course, bearing no comparison to them in relation to their material dimensions. That writer says, that Julius Cæsar, in his Consulship, ordered the diurnal acts of the Senate and the people to be published. It may be well to give two specimens of the kind of intelligence to be met with in the *Acta Diurna* of Ancient Rome. The following is dated the 4th of the Kalends of April, in the year 585 after the Building of Rome:—"It thundered, and an oak was struck with lightning in that part of Mount

Palatine called Summa Velia, early in the afternoon. A fray happened in a tavern at the lower end of the Banker Street, in which the keeper of the Hog-in-Armour tavern was dangerously wounded. Tertinius, the Ædile, fined the butchers for selling meat which had not been inspected by the overseers of the markets. The fine is to be employed in building a chapel to the temple of the goddess Tellus."

Does not this look very like the information, and the mode of giving it, which appears in our newspapers in the year 1871, making, of course, allowance for the difference between the religion of Great Britain in the present day, and that of Rome at the period referred to? Another specimen of the contents of the *Acta Diurna* is the following:—"On the 3rd of the Kalends of April, it rained stones on Mount Veientine. Posthumius the Tribune sent his beadle to the Consul because he was unwilling to convene the Senate on that day; but the Tribune Decimus putting in his veto, the affair went no further."

But in order that every further facility might be given to the public to become acquainted at as early a period as possible, with the news of the day, Julius Cæsar desired the written journals to be hung up in the galleries which, in imitation of those in Athens, he had caused to be constructed at his villa in Tuentum. But this state of things was not of long duration; it ended with the reign of Cæsar. The Emperor Augustus, on coming into power, adopted the very opposite course. He was a great despot,



and, like all tyrants, whether of ancient or modern times, he detested and dreaded anything which had the semblance of liberty in writing or speaking. In accordance with the tyranny of his character as a ruler, he promulgated sanguinary laws against libels in any and every form. Still further, in his determination to crush whatever might have the semblance of freedom in speaking or writing, he issued an edict to the effect that the authors of satirical writings should be punished with death. I have met with no evidence to prove that this sanguinary enactment was ever carried out by Augustus; but there is abundant evidence to show that succeeding tyrants availed themselves of its provisions, and put to death numerous persons charged with being guilty of satirical or libellous writings.

The reporters for the "pen," not for the "press," at this early period in newspaper history, were called "actuarii." They must before the Christian era have possessed a knowledge of, and been able to practise short-hand, for the Roman historians tell us that they were employed by Cicero to take down verbatim the speech of Cato in the great debate in the Senate on the trial of those who had been concerned in the Catiline conspiracy.

That the antiquity of newspapers in Rome, so far as the idea is concerned, goes as far back as more than several centuries before the Christian era, is a fact fully established. But a still greater age for newspaper journalism is claimed by the Chinese. They them-

selves affirm, that in their empire an official gazette was published many centuries before the building of Rome. Much credit would not be given to their claims to newspaper antiquity did they stand alone, but they are supported by the Roman historians, who on various occasions quote the *Acta Diurna*, or, as they were called *The Daily Advertisers of China*. The Chinese also affirm that they discovered and employed printing in the first century; but knowing with what fables and fictions their chronology abounds, we are not bound to believe this in the absence of any corroborative evidence.

From before the Christian era till the time when the Venetian Republic was in its greatest glory, we hear of no medium of intelligence at all resembling our present newspapers existing in any part of Europe, until 1566, when publications somewhat resembling our earlier newspapers made their appearance. The *Notizie Scritte*, published monthly in Venice, is said to have been the first of the Italian newspapers, and was published, not in print, but in manuscript. *Gazettes*, or newspapers, soon after became more common; and any person was at liberty to read them who chose to pay a small coin, called a *gazetta*, for that permission. Italy, therefore, and Venice, the capital of Lombardy in Italy, have the right to claim the honour of having been the first to introduce to the European public the newspaper press, each journal being called *Gazetta*, after the name of the coin. The government, becoming afraid that if these *gazettas*

were printed the copies might be multiplied to an extent which would be inconvenient, prohibited the printing of them for many years, and rendered it obligatory on the publishers to issue their journals in manuscript. Chalmers, in his "Life of Ruddiman," says that the first *printed Gazette* in Vienna, appeared in 1562. Chalmers, however, I ought to mention, contends that Venice was not the first place in which the *Gazettes* were published. He says they were printed in Augsburg and Vienna, and other German towns, in 1524; but it is admitted that in no instance were these *Gazettes* numbered to show that they were continuous. The first numbered sheets appeared in 1612.

It may be well before proceeding to give an account of the rise, progress, and present state of the newspaper press, to advert to the origin of the word "News." In the first series of *Notes and Queries*, established upwards of twenty years ago, attention was called to the two questions—when the word first came into common use—and as to whether it was of English origin, or imported from abroad.

With regard to the first point, it appears sufficiently clear, that the word first came into use in this country early in the sixteenth century. At all events, there are no traces of its use either in the works of Chaucer, or any of the writers whose works are best known previous to that period. The nearest approach to the use of the word by Chaucer is to be found in the following lines in his "Troilus and Creseide:"—

There is right now come into the towne a gest,  
A Greek espie, and telleth *neue things*,  
For which I come to tell *neue tidings*.

The transition from "neue things," or "neuetidings," to "newes" was natural; and, accordingly, the word "news" soon afterwards came into general use; and it was used in the sense of intelligence, or "new tidings," coming from any quarter. It was so employed in a letter dated "Rome, September, 1513," from the Cardinal of York, as quoted in "Rymer's Fœdera," addressed to Henry VIII.: "After this 'newes' afforesaide was dyvulgate in the citie here." The reference was to a victory which had just been gained by King Henry over the French, and known in history as the Battle of the Spurs, which battle gave rise to the common expression, "He has won his spurs," as indicative of some brave or meritorious deed.

The theory advanced by some writers is, that the word derived its use, so far as related to the journals of the seventeenth century, from the initial letters of the four cardinal points of the compass, "N.E.W.S.," as expressive of their receiving early intelligence from all parts of the world. Bolton Corney, who thirty or forty years ago enjoyed a high reputation for the attention which he had successfully paid to etymological matters, was of opinion that there existed no better authority for this alleged derivation of the word "News," than the following epigram in a work published in 1640 entitled "Wits and Recreations:":

When news doth come, if any would discuss  
The letter of the word, resolve it thus:  
News is conveyed by letter, word, or mouth,  
And comes to us from north, east, west, or south.

This theory is satisfactorily disproved from the simple fact, that at the period when the journals first employed the word, it was not spelt as now, but in the manner already indicated. "Newes" having *five* letters could not have been employed in the sense of a word which had only *four*.

With regard to the second question, as to whether the word is of English or foreign origin, it appears to be conclusively established in *Notes and Queries*, that it was first used in Germany, and thence imported into England.

Much curiosity has been felt to learn the date of the first English newspaper, and the circumstances under which it made its appearance. This is natural, when we contemplate the mighty—I had almost said omnipotent—moral influence which the journalism of the present day exercises on the minds of mankind. But the origin of what may be called the English newspaper, as the phrase is understood, is shrouded in a mystery which none of the many efforts made with that view, have yet been able to explain. There can be no doubt that the first printed intelligence of importance transmitted by government to various parts of the country, in a form somewhat resembling the newspapers of half a century afterwards, was sent by Lord Burleigh, then Prime

Minister of Queen Elizabeth, in the year 1588. The intelligence related to the fact of the Spanish Armada having made a descent on the English coast. The only copies now known to exist of these journals, conveying intelligence from time to time without any fixed days for publication, are to be found in the collection of Dr. Birch in the British Museum. Unfortunately the earlier numbers are lost, otherwise we might have had more specific information as to the circumstances under which they came to be printed and circulated in the principal parts of the provinces. The numbers still extant are 50, 51, and 53. A writer in the *Penny Cyclopædia* ventures an opinion that, as so many as forty-nine previous numbers of this publication, which was called the *English Mercurie*, were published, printing may have been had recourse to for similar purposes before the year 1588. This is only conjecture. It may, however, be a fact, but there is no evidence to support it. Nothing could be more natural than that so intelligent and sagacious a statesman as Lord Burleigh, serving so enlightened and enterprising a sovereign as Elizabeth, should have resorted to the printing-press to inform, as early as possible, the subjects of her Majesty throughout the country, of events in which they must all have felt the most profound interest. It is certain that, so far as related to this country, no more exciting event had occurred since printing had come into use in England, than the entry of the Spanish Armada into the English Channel. It was the special mission



of this earliest of English newspapers to combine the correction of false intelligence with the diffusion of true information respecting the progress of the Spanish Armada.

I have said that the name of the first English newspaper published at the period in question was the *English Mercurie*; and seven copies of a journal under that title, and professing to be published at the period in question, are to be found in the British Museum. No one seems to have doubted the genuineness of the copies of this paper until, in the year 1839, the late Mr. Watts, librarian in the British Museum, proved to demonstration that these seven copies of this so-called *English Mercurie*, were forgeries, executed about the year 1740. The three copies that are in print and the four in manuscript were shown, with equal conclusiveness, to have been forged. How the forgery had escaped detection so long—that is, for nearly a hundred years—has been a matter of great surprise. Yet the fact is that it did so escape, just as we have had, in more modern times, similar instances of successful literary forgeries. Who has forgotten the case of Ireland's attempting to palm off on the public—and for a time, to a great extent, successfully—tragedies and comedies of his own composition, as newly-discovered plays of Shakspeare? But that the forgeries of the *English Mercurie* of Queen Elizabeth's time should have so long escaped detection, is not perhaps so surprising as the fact that there are persons at the present day who entertain doubts, if they do

not actually deny, that the publications in question were forgeries. In an article in the *Penny Cyclopædia* no one can fail to discern at least a leaning to the belief that the seven copies of the so-called *English Mercurie* were genuine,—both those which are printed and those which are in manuscript. A writer in Partington's *Cyclopædia* goes still farther than the *Penny Cyclopædia*. He assumes it to be a fact that the numbers in question of the *English Mercurie* are genuine. We cannot help wondering how any one who has read the article on newspapers by the elder Disraeli in the latest edition of his "Curiosities of Literature," or some of the many articles in the *Quarterly Review* on the subject, could have entertained a doubt as to their being spurious.

But apart from the irrefragable evidence which the elder Disraeli, the *Quarterly Review*, and other authors and reviewers, have brought forward to prove that the *English Mercurie* publications were forgeries, there is one fact which of itself ought to have prevented the success of the imposition. Those who have consulted the seven copies in the British Museum cannot fail to have observed that each number contains advertisements; whereas at the period in question none of the newspapers published contained any advertisements, beyond those of a few books. Nor did the newspapers, so far as I have discovered, in any part of the sixteenth century open their columns to the insertion of advertisements. That practice did not begin until after the commencement of the second



half of the seventeenth century. I have not seen this obvious argument made use of by any writer, as proving that the seven alleged Elizabethan journals were forgeries; but to my mind the argument is conclusive on the point.

In this case, we have an interesting and instructive illustration of how important historical inaccuracies often occur. The origin of this error may be told in a few words. Mr. George Chalmers, a Scotchman of considerable literary reputation wrote, towards the close of the last century, a biography of Mr. Thomas Ruddiman, who lived about the middle of the century, and who possessed a very high classical reputation, combined with a knowledge of typography and a taste for the art, which rendered him, in these latter respects, the most eminent man of his day. Mr. Ruddiman had also been for nearly half a century the keeper of the Library of Advocates in Edinburgh. In this work Chalmers gave an account of his personal inspection in the British Museum of the seven copies of the alleged *English Mercurie*, of the date of 1588, never for a moment doubting their genuineness. His account was transferred to the pages of the *Gentleman's Magazine* in the year 1794. Afterwards it found its way into several other works relative to the early history of newspapers; and in the course of time into various Encyclopædias. Amongst these latter may be mentioned the *Encyclopædia Londinensis*, the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*, and the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. These latter publications implicitly fol-

lowed each other, without quoting Chalmers as their authority for their statements. Thus the story obtained universal credence. Disraeli himself, as before remarked, received it as trustworthy, and gave it, in the earlier editions of his "Curiosities of Literature," as historically correct. Afterwards, however, Disraeli ascertained that the thing was a deliberate forgery; and desirous of giving to the fact the most complete exposure in his power, he published the following in the preface to the twelfth edition of his work: "I witnessed, fifty years ago, that laborious researcher (Chalmers) busied among the long dusty shelves of an hundred papers which then reposed in the ante-chamber of the British Museum. To the industry which I had witnessed I confided, and such positive and precise evidence could not fail to be accepted by all. In the British Museum, indeed, George Chalmers found the printed *English Mercurie*; but there also, it now appears, he might have seen the original, with all its corrections, before it was sent to the press, written on paper of modern date." Mr. Disraeli adds: "The fact is, the whole is a modern forgery; for which Birch, preserving it among his papers, has not assigned either the occasion or the motive. I am inclined," continues the author of the "Curiosities," "to think it was a *jeu d'esprit* of historical antiquarians, concocted by himself and his friends the Yorkes." If Mr. Disraeli's theory of the forgery of the papers in question is correct, no language can stigmatize in sufficiently strong terms the conduct of

Dr. Birch. He succeeded in practising a grave imposture on the world for considerably over half a century; and but for the fortunate circumstance—accident, it might in a sense be called—of the late Mr. Watts, of the British Museum, having detected and exposed the iniquitous forgery, an important historical mis-statement might have been everywhere, and by everybody, implicitly believed till the end of time. The detection of historical errors like this has a very painful and injurious effect when reading the annals of any age or country. It has a tendency to inspire us with more or less of distrust as to the truth of that which we most earnestly desire to believe. And this is a most unpleasant frame of mind in which to peruse the pages of any work in which we feel a special interest.

Some writers on early newspaper history who lived in the latter part of the last century, have got together various facts—at least they regarded them as such—to establish an origin for one English newspaper, much further back than the *Weekly News* of 1622, which I hold to have been the first. This newspaper was called the *Gallo-Belgicus*. The editor of Dodsley's "Old Plays," confidently asserts that *Gallo-Belgicus* was the "name of the first newspaper published in England." But, as Chalmers remarks, "he maintains his position from ancient plays, and draws his proofs from obsolete poetry." Dodsley quotes, for instance, from a comedy first acted in 1629, entitled "The Heir," and written by a Mr. May, who, in the

early part of the seventeenth century, possessed some reputation as a dramatic writer, although almost entirely forgotten in the present day. The comedy in question opens thus:—

POLYMETES. Hast thou divulged the “news,”  
That my son died at Athens?

Roscid makes answer in the following terms:—

Yes, my lord,  
With every circumstance, the time, the place,  
And manner of his death; that 'tis believed  
And told for “news,” with as much confidence  
As if 'twere writ in *Gallo-Belgicus*.

Some publication or other entitled *Gallo-Belgicus* is mentioned by Beaumont and Fletcher in “The Fair Maid of the Inn,” but nothing can be inferred from what they say as to its character. The eccentric Dr. Donne, too, mentions the *Gallo-Belgicus* in a work of his published in 1611. It is also mentioned in a work entitled “Carew’s Survey of Cornwall,” which was originally published in 1602. But in neither of these cases is any definite idea of the nature of the publication given. Feeling a curiosity to know the real facts, Chalmers tells us that he went to the British Museum, where he says, he saw and handled *Gallo-Belgicus*, and found that instead of being a newspaper it was a work consisting of many volumes, the first of which was published in Latin, in 1588, and might have been entitled “The State of the Empire; or, the Annual Register,” but most certainly it was not a newspaper. We are there-

fore compelled to recur to the conclusion, that the earliest English newspaper, as we understand the term, was Butter's *Weekly News*, of 1622.

Some writers, in their zeal to make out a high antiquity for English newspapers, go even much farther back than the reign of Elizabeth. There is a publication entitled the *Relations*, published as early as 1462, which some have contended comes under the category of a newspaper; but it has no pretensions to be so regarded, because it relates to only one subject, namely "A Manifesto by the new Archbishop of Cologne against Adolph of Nassau." A few years later, namely in 1475, there is an account—published in a pamphlet of two centuries later—of the Siege and Capture of Caffa by the Turks; but that pamphlet too confined itself to the one subject which the title indicates. In 1493 there is a letter of Columbus, printed at Rome, giving an account—the first ever published—of the discovery of America; but that is the only topic, and therefore the production has no claim to be regarded as a newspaper. But there is a pamphlet of a date anterior to the year 1527, which even the late Mr. Watts, of the British Museum, was disposed to think ought to be classed among early English newspapers. It is one bearing the title of *New Tidings*. Its contents are given as follows: "The Battle of the Turkish Emperor with Louis, King of Hungary, on the Day of the Beheading of John the Baptist, 1526. Also the Turkish Challenge sent to King Louis be-

fore the Battle. Also a Lamentable Epistle that the Hungarians have sent to the King of Poland since the Battle. Also some New Tidings of the Pope at Rome—what happened on the 27th September, 1526.”

It will be seen that the several headings here given, with the sole exception of that which relates to the Pope at Rome, have a close connexion with each other. Not having access to the publication, which is not in the British Museum, it is possible that which refers to the Pope may be of the briefest and least interesting kind. After hearing all the arguments which have been advanced in favour of an earlier newspaper history than that which I have assigned to it, I am forced to the conclusion that no case has been made out for the existence of a newspaper, in the proper sense of the word, before the time which I have specified.

Towards the close of the first half of the seventeenth century various journals made their appearance. This particular period is called by some historians “the era of the *Mercuries*,” owing to the fact that the majority of the publications which then made their appearance were called *Mercuries*. To mention only a few of the abundant crop of *Mercuries* which sprung up at this time, I will enumerate the following. There was then the *Mercurie Pragmatical*, and a journal got up in opposition to it, under the title of the *Anti-Mercurius Pragmaticus*. Other Mercury titles were the *Mercurius Bellicosus*; or an *Alarm to all Rebels*; and the *Mercurius Melancholicus*. There were



also at this period Medical Mercuries, devoted to the interests of the medical profession.

It is a curious fact, that for nearly half a century no name of any note appeared in connexion with the newspaper press of that day, with the exception of the names of Marchmont Needham and Nathaniel Butter. It was the latter who printed the first English weekly paper. Two other names came prominently forward immediately after those I have mentioned, and to these I shall hereafter refer.

Though I have been unable to find any trace of what may be called a regular newspaper prior to 1622,—the year in which the Thirty Years War broke out,—there were previous to this time journals that were published irregularly,—some of them at intervals of several months. The name of the earliest of the journals of that time was *The Certaine News of the Present Week*. It was the first of a certain class of political journals. The proprietor was a well-known man in the newspaper world at the time. Afterwards there came a crowd of journals, all of them of small dimensions, and most of them published weekly. They soon got into collision, and rated each other in the coarsest style. In fact the only thing in the shape of original writing which appeared in their columns was their vituperation of each other. One newspaper was often started for the avowed purpose of assailing another. One publication made its appearance under the title of the *Weekly Discoverer*. Close on its heels followed

another, bearing the title of the *Discoverer Stripped Naked*, and breathing a spirit of intense antagonism to the journal which it was set on foot to destroy. The titles of many of these journals towards the close of the first half of the seventeenth century sound very strange to modern ears. We find one called the *Scots Dove*, which, notwithstanding its title, was published in London. It would be difficult to ascertain the reason why this title was adopted. The people of Scotland have no established special character for dove-like dispositions. It is just possible that the reason for choosing the title in question may have been given in the first number, but it happens to be lost. Nor indeed is there any number in the British Museum earlier than 103. Another strange title of a newspaper of the closing first quarter of the seventeenth century is the *Parliamentary Kite*; a third, the *Secret Owl*; and a fourth, the *Man in the Moon*. I have said that one journal was at this period in the history of the newspaper press frequently started for the avowed purpose of doing battle with some other journal; but about the beginning of the second quarter of the seventeenth century there appeared a journal proclaiming, in the most energetic language it could employ, its determination to raise its editorial hand against one and all of the editorial fraternity; and that it was its purpose to enter the arena of conflict single-handed. It feared no foe, and courted no favour. Its title was, as one of Shakspeare's



Welsh characters would say, as “prave” as its challenge to the entire editorial host of its day. It was called *Mercury Mastix; Faithfully Lashing all Scouts, Mercuries, Posts, Spies, and Others. Scout, Spy, &c.*, I ought here to remark, were titles of contemporary journals.

The following is a specimen of the sort of abuse which characterized the journalism of that day. The *Mercurius Britannicus*, first published in 1642, is the assailant, and the *Academicus* the party assailed. At this time, it will be seen, italics were liberally used :

Now come on, *Academicus* ; down with your pack, and let's see what *peddling* stuff you have brought to *town*. How, a comment upon *Britannicus* ! That work has befitted some one more *reverend* ; and the *novice* might have had the manners to give his elders leave first. But O—see, the *Oxford Pamphleteer* means to forestall the design, and spoil the market at London ; though I can tell you I value no such *farthing projects*, for they are easily puffed away in half a page. My ink immediately destroys all *paper worms* ; and if need be, I add aquafortis and bay-salt to my *galls* and *copperas*. And now let them *proceed* when they please. In the mean time, I just order *Academicus*, and take his *brains* off the *tenter hooks* ; for the wretch crucifies himself, and me too, in every line, without fears or wit ; and he begins thus :—

“The first thing we meet with this week is a sheet of *Britannicus*, and, indeed, a *sheet* will become him as the *garment of repentance*.”

You see that he rises early ; and it is his week's work to crow over *Britannicus*. Yet to little purpose ; for he is not able to understand him as he should do in the least measure ; besides, he hath not left his school-boy tricks yet, but sullies and blurs my proofs with blots and impudence ; so

that, for his honesty and discretion, he may even return to his horn-book again. Then for the garment of *repentance*, the sheet of *penance*, I mean to send it to St. Germans in France; and ere long I'll provide another too for Oxford; a winding-sheet for you, for you, sirrah, and two dozen for the bishops. The *hobgoblin* capes will serve them for maize, and so would the surplice for winding-sheets; but that I hear the holy vestments are turned into consecrated lint for the wounded in this sacred prelatical cause; and now they have not one rag of *repentance* to fast in.

Mr. Wingrove Cook, in his "History of Party," gives a racy specimen of the rancorous manner in which the political opponents of that day were in the habit of vituperating each other. A "Nathaniel Thompson" is the assailant, and a Mr. Carte, editor of the *City and Country News*, is the party assailed.

There hath lately, (says Nathaniel Thompson,) dropped into the world an abortive birth (some fifteen days before the legitimate issue) by a factious, infamous, perjured anti-Christian, a senseless, lying pamphlet by the name of the *City and Country News*. This is the first of his offspring that ever bore a name, the rest being spurious and illegitimate, like his natural issue, which he either durst not own, or would not bring to the font to receive the marks of Christianity no more than himself. This pamphlet-trapper and press-pirate hath crimped abroad since he put up for himself to make a prize of other men's copies, to stuff his own cargo with ill-gotten profit; making his business cheating and usurpation, to defraud all men, and by factious libels to sow sedition amongst the people, and frighten allegiance from the subjects' bosoms. Now I leave yourselves and all honest men to be judges whether of the two be the best intelligence; he having not only stolen from our other intelligences, but likewise from mine, to make up his sense-

less scrawl, as particularly the relation of Mr. Carte, the Jesuit, taken in St. James's, which he inserted in his for want of matter, three days after the same was published by me in a single half sheet; and this is the whole proceeding of this infallible newsmonger.

Disraeli, in his "Curiosities of Literature," speaks of Marchmont Needham as being about this time the leading person known in connexion with the newspaper press. He styles him "the patriarch of the newspaper press;" but there were two others who were also regarded as impersonators of the journalism of the period. One was Sir John Birkenhead, and the other Sir Roger l'Estrange. The latter had several newspapers, and prostituted them to the support of the powers in the ascendant at the time. He was a veritable Vicar of Bray. To-day he was an ultra-Royalist; to-morrow a violent Presbyterian and anti-monarchist. He was a man whose inconsistencies and contradictions of himself brought him into universal disrespect; yet his power as a political writer gave him an importance which neither of the factions of the day felt it politic to despise. He was eventually appointed a "licenser of the press;" and one of his first acts, though he had hitherto lived by the press, was to issue a proclamation which in effect struck at its liberty. This, as might be expected, greatly increased the odium in which he had before been held. Even Queen Mary, as mentioned by Mr. Disraeli, "showed a due contempt of him after the Revolution by penning this anagram:"

Roger l'Estrange,  
Lye Strange Roger.

In my next chapter I shall have something more to say of this Sir Roger l'Estrange.

But though the three persons named were, at the period of which I am treating, strictly speaking the chief newspaper men of note, there were various others whose names still live in history, who, without being professedly engaged in newspaper work, contributed more or less liberally to the newspaper journalism of their day. Among these may be mentioned the well-known names of Peter Heylin, Dryden, Andrew Marvel, Daniel Defoe, and John Milton. When these eminent men wrote in any of the contemporary journals, it was invariably in an intensely party spirit, but on subjects of a general kind. As a rule, however, it ought to be mentioned that these writers, and other contemporary celebrities in the literature of that day, resorted to the pamphlet form, which was then printed in the newspaper shape. These pamphlets were consequently called "news-pamphlets."

In the year 1662 a paper entitled the *Kingdom's Intelligencer* was commenced in the metropolis. It sought, successfully, to give a higher tone to the newspaper press than had hitherto characterized it.

Various expedients were resorted to at this period by the proprietors of newspapers to bring their journals into notice. Not the least curious was that adopted by the proprietor of the *Flying Post*. This gentleman announced: "That if any gentleman had

a wish to oblige his country friend or correspondent with his account of public affairs, he may have it for twopence, of J. Salisbury, at the Rising Sun in Cornhill, on a sheet of fine paper, half of which being blank; he may there write his own private business, or the material news of the day."

This Mr. Salisbury was not the only newspaper proprietor who resorted to this ingenious device to promote the sale of his paper. A Mr. Dawkes had a journal, under the title of *News-Letter*, in which he also invited purchasers in the following terms: "This *Letter* will be done on good writing-paper, and blank space left that every gentleman may write his own private business. It will be useful to improve the younger sort in writing a curious hand."

But odd as this appears to us of the present day, it must seem stranger still that there should have been proprietors of newspapers who, whenever there was a dearth of intelligence, transferred one or more chapters of the Bible to "fill up" the vacant space. Only fancy the *Times* giving from time to time one or more chapters of the Bible to "fill up" its columns, consequent on the want of intelligence of interest!

For at least half a century after the establishment of newspapers, none of them, so far as I have been able to ascertain, introduced advertisements. The earliest instance in which general advertisements were inserted, which I have met with, was in the year 1658, under the date November 25th. The paper

in which these advertisements—fifteen in number—appeared, bore the title of the *Commonwealth Mercury*. It consisted of eight pages, which, with the exception of the space allotted to the advertisements, were exclusively devoted to an account of the preparations then making for the funeral of Oliver Cromwell. It is worthy of observation, that among the first of the advertisements in the newspapers of more than two hundred years ago, I have found one or two written in essentially the same style, and possessing the same characteristics, as the empirical advertisements of the present day.

But soon after this period in the history of the newspaper press, the practice of inserting advertisements began to be common. There being at the time no tax on advertisements, the terms, as an inducement to persons to advertise, were certainly extremely moderate. The *Index Intelligencer*, of 1673, opened its columns at the reasonable rate of “a shilling for a horse or coach for notification, and sixpence for renewing.” The *Observer Reformed* was prepared to give eight lines for a shilling, which was at the rate of three-halfpence per line. Another paper, called *Morphew’s Country Gentleman’s Courant*, soon after this advanced its charge to twopence per line; but, by what appears a very illogical sort of reasoning, he ascribed the advance in the price to the proprietor’s anxiety to extend the practice of advertising! “Seeing,” were the words of Mr. Morphew, “promotion of trade is a matter that ought to be



encouraged, the price of advertisements is advanced to twopence per line."

Among the advertisements which appeared in the newspapers of this period, and for a long time afterwards, there were some of a surpassingly strange character; at least they would seem so to us, were they to appear in our daily or weekly publications. I shall give some specimens of these in a subsequent chapter.

Before the printing of newspapers became somewhat general, it appears that noblemen and gentlemen of position employed persons in London to send them daily epitomes of the principal news about matters connected with the Court. The remuneration they received for their labour appears to have been five pounds per half-year, or ten pounds per year. The following memorandum is preserved in the Clifford family: "To Captain Robinson, by my lord's commands, for writing letters of news to his lordship for a half year, five pounds." Five pounds, it must be remembered, would then have been equivalent to fifty pounds at the present time; so that this "writer of news" to the Clifford family must have had equal to a hundred pounds for six months' work in the year; the nobility then, as now, spending usually six months of the year in the metropolis, and consequently not requiring the services, for that time, of this "gazetteer,"—the name by which this class of writers was called.

It is worthy of observation that in the seventeenth

century, as stated in the article on the Newspaper Press in the eighth edition to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, there was no such term as "editor," implying a literary man devoted to the general management of a journal, with a share in such original composition as it required. We only hear of the "printer," or at most of the "publisher." In those days, the printer found himself surrounded with difficulties; and often, from the imperfection and the simplicity of his arrangements, he was thrown into positions by no means dignified.

Among the newspapers of this period which appear to have had the largest circulation, and which was regarded as better than its contemporaries, was one which bore the title of *A Perfect Diurnal of Some Passages in Parliament, and from other Parts of the Kingdom*. Had the title ended here, it would have been argued that this was a daily journal; but the remaining portion of the title showed that it was only a weekly paper. The additional part of the title was, *From Monday till Monday. Collected for the Satisfaction of all such as Desire to be Truly Informed*. It is worthy of observation that every newspaper set on foot at this time had, as part of its title, an express declaration that its information would be correct, with, in most instances, an intimation that the intelligence contained in all other journals was wholly devoid of trustworthiness. The natural inference from this is, that there must, in the newspapers of this period, have been an immense amount of false news. Indeed,



if the assertion of each journal may be credited, its own columns were the only place in which such a thing as true intelligence was to be found.

At this time there was a great intimacy between the English and Dutch Courts ; and some of the newspapers, ingeniously taking advantage of that fact, made the words "True Intelligence from Holland" a standing part of their title, thereby implying more than would meet the modern eye. The fact sought to be conveyed was, not that Dutch intelligence was received exclusively by the paper employing the words, but that it had especial sources of its own whereby it could procure early and accurate information through Holland relative to English affairs.

The newspapers at this early date in their history evidently, as a rule, had only a short-lived existence. They seem, in nearly every case, to have been started either to gratify personal spleen or party purposes. And therefore it was not probable that with no better conditions of continuance than these, they were destined to enjoy a prolonged life. Party feeling was at the time in a very fluctuating state, and the gratification of personal animosity through means of journalism underwent changes with the ever-changing circumstances of the times. As a rule, a few years sufficed to see the cessation of the papers of the period. Of course, as one came to an end, another took its place, and in this way the number published did not, for many years, experience any diminution.

On the contrary, there was a considerable increase in the number published within twenty-five years of the period of which I am speaking,—the middle of the seventeenth century. At that time indeed very little was required to start a newspaper. No capital, beyond a few pounds, was necessary; and consequently any printer possessed of as large a fount of type as would print a couple of columns of the smaller type of the *Times*, could set up as a newspaper proprietor. Any literary or political adventurer who could get credit with a printer to the extent of five pounds, could become a journalist. There were not then such things as government securities required from the proprietor or publisher. Under these circumstances no surprise will be felt at the rapid rise and fall of newspapers in the middle of the seventeenth century.

The growing taste for newspaper reading before this time, is borne testimony to by Burton, author of the “*Anatomy of Melancholy*,” who, in that work, in the edition of 1622, makes a remark to the effect, that the only class of works which were then read were plays and news-letters,—the name by which many of these journals were called. So rapidly indeed did newspapers continue to increase in number, that while in 1660, the time of the Restoration, they, so far as can be ascertained, did not exceed ten or twelve, in 1688, the year of the Great Revolution, they numbered upwards of seventy. It is a curious fact, and deserving of mention, that the phrase “*News-Letter*” is still retained in several well-known newspapers. Saunders’

Dublin *News-Letter* is an instance. It started with that title nearly a century and a half ago, and retains the title to this hour. In Belfast too one of the leading journals goes by the name of "News-Letter;" and in California there is a popular paper published under the title of the *San Francisco News-Letter*.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE NEWSPAPER PRESS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.—PART FIRST.

First Printed Newspapers—Nathaniel Butter the first Printer—The *Weekly News* the first Printed Newspaper—Facts connected with the first Printed Political Journal—Ben Jonson's Hostility to the Newspapers of his Day—That of other Dramatists—No Newspaper Reports of Proceedings in Parliament during the Seventeenth Century—Superstition of Editors and the Public—The News Letters when Printed—Printers followed Cromwell's Army—Lord Macaulay's Description of the *London Gazette* in the earlier Period of its History—The Great Fire of London as described by the *London Gazette*—Sir Roger l'Estrange as Licenser of the Press—His Character in that Capacity—His End.

IN speaking of the earliest newspapers, it is important that the fact, to which I have already made a passing allusion, should not be lost sight of—that for very many years after the *written* News-Letters, to which I have repeatedly pointed attention, there were no *printed* news journals. Nathaniel Butter, before referred to, had, as I shall show presently, been for many years a news-letter writer before the idea occurred to him of *printing* newspapers. He was a man who, before he adopted this step, had not only enjoyed considerable reputation as a collector and arranger of news in a manuscript form, but was regarded as

a man of great general abilities. When therefore, in the year 1622, he *printed* the first number of a newspaper, under, as before mentioned, the title of the *Weekly News*, his journal met with great success. It soon rose to a large circulation,—large, I mean, compared with the circulation of newspapers of that day. Pamphlets on political questions, and containing some amount of intelligence, had before this been published in a printed form; but no newspaper, strictly so called, as the *Weekly News* of Butter was, had before this issued from any printing press. Its example was, however, speedily followed. Other printed newspapers succeeded in somewhat rapid succession; but, instead of being regularly published weekly, they were issued at longer—in several cases irregular—intervals, the favourite one being a fortnight. But before this the intervals had not only been irregular, but in many cases very long. Eight, ten, or even twelve weeks were no uncommon interval. There is one well-attested case, though the title of the journal has escaped my recollection, in which the interval between the publication of a particular number and that by which it was followed, was no less than fifteen weeks, or nearly four months. In these cases the different impressions were not numbered, but appeared as if that which succeeded the one before had been entirely unconnected with it. Nathaniel Butter's *Weekly News* was the first English newspaper which appeared duly numbered like our newspapers of the present day.

As might be expected, a resort to the manuscript writing of newspapers gradually became more and more rare, until it all but ceased entirely. For some time it was limited to what may be called *private* writing of political and party news, to leading men in the provinces who wished to receive intelligence of a kind which they could not obtain in papers which were printed, and therefore accessible to all who chose to pay for the public journals. For upwards of half a century after the Restoration, so far as my researches go, no allusion is made to these in the newspapers; but, curiously enough, I find an advertisement in one of the journals of the day, published in 1712, intimating that at least one newspaper in manuscript was then published, and that blank pages were left for those purchasers who might wish to avail themselves of that means of privately corresponding with their friends in the country. This is the last allusion which I have met with to the manuscript newspapers,—for upwards of half a century the only form in which the earlier English newspapers were issued.

During the whole of the seventeenth century, and until a later period, as I shall show hereafter, no reports of the proceedings in Parliament appeared in any of the newspapers. Neither, indeed, except on very rare occasions, was the slightest reference made to them. The same observation equally applies to public meetings. No one would know from the newspapers of the seventeenth century that such things as public meetings on important public ques-

tions ever were held. Some tragical occurrences, such as frightful murders or fearfully fatal accidents, were briefly recorded; but there was hardly anything else to be found in the columns of these prints in the shape of general intelligence. What is now called "penny-a-lining" was unknown in those days. Neither, indeed, can I find any trace of any one being attached to any of their establishments, invested with the functions incident to the office—universal in our day—of that of reporter. How different the state of matters now!

The smallest newspapers in this year of grace 1871—even those which are published at a halfpenny—have one or more reporters belonging to their establishments.

But though ordinary intelligence of public interest seemed to have but few or no attractions for these journals, they seized with avidity, and gave prominence to, anything which bore the stamp of superstition. Here is one instance of the extreme superstition which existed at the time, and the eagerness with which the newspaper press of the day ministered to the prevalent credulity. In the *Marine Mercury* of 1642 we find what is there headed—

A True Relation of the Strange Appearance of a Man-Fish about three miles within the River Thames, having a Musket in one Hand and a Petition in the other, credibly reported by Six Sailors, who both saw and talked with the Monster, whose names here following are inserted.

But this is not the only "monster" whose advent



is there duly recorded. Eleven years later we have another instance brought before us of the advent of one of these marine marvels, and which is invested with, in some respects, a still greater interest. The "monster" in this case is a lady; and being so, we are sorry that the epithet should have been applied to her, as it was by some of the journals of the day. It is not so applied, however—it is gratifying to be able to say—by the writer to whom we are indebted for what follows, which I give with this prefatory observation,—that one cannot but regret that as the marine gentleman and lady seemed to visit the same locality on the banks of the Thames, they did not do so at or about the same time, instead of at the long interval of eleven years; because in that case there would have been a dramatic fitness in considering them to be husband and wife. In one of the newspapers, dated November 2, 1653, and entitled the *Mercurius Demetricus*; or, *a True and Faithful Nocturnal*, we read—

A perfect Mermaid was, by the last great wind, driven ashore near Greenwich, with her comb in one hand and her looking-glass in the other. She seemed to be of the countenance of a most fair and beautiful woman, with her arms crossed, weeping out many pearly drops of salt tears; and afterwards, she gently turning herself upon her back again, swam away without being seen any more.

I have no means of knowing whether the writer who penned this paragraph ever attained to the reputation of a novelist, or sought to attain it by some such blending of fiction with fact; but assuredly



nature gave him those gifts which are most essential to the achievement of success in that style of writing. Just only think of the warm admiration he feels for his mermaid heroine, and the tender interest he expresses in her history, so far as her passing visit to the shores near Greenwich enabled him to become acquainted with it. Her "countenance was most fair and beautiful,"—such as any person possessing the slightest perception of what is lovely could not fail to admire. But the crowning point in the paragraph is that in which, expressing his sympathy with, as well as admiration of, his heroine, the writer describes her as appearing in the attitude of having her "arms crossed." She "weeps out pearly drops of salt tears!" Who could have remained unmoved at such a sight? What man with even an atom of sensibility, not to say gallantry, would not have shed tears in torrents in response to the "pearly drops" of this lovely mermaid?

There would have been nothing particularly surprising in matrimonial relations between this gentleman and lady of the half-human and half-fishy species, if there be any truth in one of Crofton Croker's "Tales and Legends," which, of course, though he relates it, I do not say or suppose for a moment, he himself believed it. This popular Irish author relates the circumstances under which one of his Irish countrymen courted and was married to a mermaid. But while we are amazed at the credulity which led people of a past period, even editors of

newspapers, to believe in mermaids, it is but justice to them that we should moderate our surprise and pity at their credulity, for we find that similar credulity, in relation to the same point has been found to exist even so recently as in the present generation. In the year 1857, two fishermen living and plying their occupation in the county of Argyle, declared, according to a work by Mr. John Timbs, entitled "Eccentricities of the Animal Creation," that on their way, in a boat, to the fishing station of Lochindale, and when about four miles south-west from that village, "they distinctly saw, about six o'clock on a June evening, at about six yards distance, an object in the form of a woman, with comely face and fine hair hanging in ringlets over the neck and shoulders. It was above the surface of the water gazing at the fishermen for three or four minutes, and then vanished." Mr. Timbs adds, "Yet this declaration was officially attested!"

The external appearance of the newspapers of the period to which my remarks relate, was in keeping with their low moral and intellectual character. Putting aside their diminutive proportions, the quality of their paper and the type employed were of the worst conceivable kind. They remind one, in the majority of cases, of the brownish coarse paper, fit only for wrapping up parcels of sugar and tea, which is still the material on which the well-known Seven Dials songs are printed; while the type is sufficiently broken and otherwise defaced to establish a perfect

harmony between the two. Yet, notwithstanding the coarseness of the paper and print of newspapers during the whole of the seventeenth century, there was one which called itself an *illustrated* journal. Its title was the *Mercurius Civicus*. From its title—for I have not been able to procure a sight of a copy—I presume it may be regarded as the *City Press* of its day. Those who have seen it state that its first number, published in 1643, contained a portrait of Charles I., and also one of Sir Thomas Fairfax, both engraved on wood; but they are described as having been so badly printed, that, even if they had been tolerably engraved, they could not have borne the slightest resemblance to either of the distinguished parties whose portraits they professed to be. Let the reader just try to contrast this illustrated paper of more than two centuries ago, with the *London Illustrated News* of the present day!

What the *material* and size of the earlier newspapers were, may be inferred from a fact which is stated in Eliot Warburton's "Memoirs of Prince Rupert and the Cavaliers." In that work the author mentions that several of the Cavaliers—described by Hume as a class who were a kind of body-guard of the King—when taken prisoners, were known to *eat* the News-letters which had been printed for the information of the officers only, and which, had they been read, would have played the game of the enemy! Only fancy any one attempting to *eat* a copy of the *Times*, double supplement and all, of the present day!

The man who could do this—if any man could—must have a stomach of more than ordinary proportions and voracity.

I have adverted once and again in previous parts of what I have written, to the coarseness and violence with which the conductors of the newspaper press of the seventeenth century habitually attacked each other. I ought not to omit to make some reference to the envenomed ridicule to which they were held up at the instance of literary men, but more particularly of the most eminent of the dramatic writers. This was more especially the case towards the close of the first quarter of the century. Ben Jonson's personal hostility to those who were known to be the proprietors of the principal newspapers of his time, exceeded all bounds. Among the papers especially singled out as the object of his rancour was one called *The Times News*,—so that England had, nearly two centuries and a half ago, as we have in our day, its *Times* newspaper. One party whom Ben Jonson assailed with a bitterness which could scarcely be surpassed, was Nathaniel Butter, to whom I have again and again referred, as being the proprietor of several newspapers which were the most influential and largely circulated of any of the contemporary journals.

Ben Jonson, in 1625, brought out a drama called "The Staple of News," the principal object of which manifestly was to hold up to ridicule the chief contemporary newspapers and their proprietors, but espe-

cially Nathaniel Butter and his journals. Gifford, in a note in his edition of Ben Jonson's Works, seems to be of opinion that "The Staple of News" had been written almost immediately after the appearance of a few numbers of Butter's *Weekly News*, but that its production on the stage was deferred, for some unknown reasons, until 1625, an interval of three years, when it was acted by "his Majesty's servants."

Hardly less inveterate was the hostility to newspapers and their proprietors which was felt by Fletcher, of the dramatic firm of "Fletcher and Beaumont." He was indeed in some respects more bitter than Ben Jonson, and certainly more personal in his attacks on Butter, believing him to be the chief, if not the sole writer of the articles in the *Weekly News*. Butter had been a stationer, but failed in business before he took, first to news *writing* in manuscript letters, and afterwards to news *printing*. It is in relation to this circumstance that Fletcher, in his drama "The Fair Maid of the Inn," says, "The ghost of some lying stationer, &c." But the most telling hit is the play on Butter's name, when the dramatist says, "The spirit of Butter shall look as if *butter* would not melt in his mouth."

Nor was Shirley, though not quite so bad as Ben Jonson and Fletcher, free from a marked enmity to the newspapers and their proprietors of his day. I have seen nothing in these publications which could have evoked all this extraordinary dramatic rancour. Could the cause have been that the growing in-

terest taken in the increasing number and circulation of these newspapers had been attended with the effect of withdrawing attention from, and lessening the popularity of, the dramatic productions of the writers I have mentioned? Be that as it may, not only had the newspapers, on this account a hard time of it at this early period of the seventeenth century, but during well-nigh the whole of it; for on those occasions, few and far between, when there was an intermission to their own fierce quarrels, they were treated with rigour by the Government. What made the severities which they received at the hands of successive governments all the more difficult to bear was, that with very rare exceptions, they were so notoriously corrupt, and ever so ready to prostitute their journalistic influence, whenever or by whomsoever they were adequately paid for it, that the public never felt the slightest sympathy for them in their troubles.

Out of London, in the early part of Cromwell's Protectorate, there were no newspapers in the provinces; but printers from London followed his army, and reprinted the official journal. In 1652 Christopher Higgins reprinted the official journal at Leith.

During the Protectorate of Cromwell the newspaper press knew, as will have been observed from what I have before stated, what it was to enjoy the luxury of freedom. The natural result was that a very great increase took place in the number of new political journals. Most of them, however, had only a very brief existence. Many of their number could not boast of



a longer life than six or seven months—nay, many of them not so much as even that term of life. But, as might have been expected, from what was known of the antecedents of Charles II., the freedom of the press, which previously existed, came to an immediate end on his ascending the throne. Hardly had he done so, than an edict was issued, prohibiting the publication of any journal except the *London Gazette*, which was originally printed at Oxford, and called the *Oxford Gazette*,—the Court being then resident there on account of the plague raging in London at the time, 1665, when it was commenced, and for some time afterwards. This was an act of pure despotism. But Government at this time reserved to itself the right—a right which there was none to dispute—to publish a broad sheet in connexion with the *London Gazette*, whenever they might deem it expedient, which should contain either foreign or domestic matters of interest,—of the knowledge of which some of the King's subjects might wish to be put in early possession. As, therefore, the people of England, at this period of its history, had no other means of obtaining political information, whether in relation to affairs at home or abroad, except through the official *London Gazette*, it will be a very natural question to ask, “What was the quantity and what the quality of the information which it furnished to his Majesty's subjects?” I could give quite a definite answer to the question, grounding my statements on certain well known facts incident

to the period ; but instead of giving an answer of my own, I prefer returning one—and I am sure my readers will agree with me in so doing—in the words of Lord Macaulay. In his “History of England” he thus expresses himself regarding the character of the *London Gazette*, immediately after the advent of Charles II. “The *London Gazette* came out on Mondays and Thursdays, but now, and for a long time past, on Tuesdays and Fridays. The contents generally were a royal proclamation ; two or three Tory addresses ; notices of two or three promotions ; an account of a skirmish between the Imperial troops and the Janissaries on the Danube ; a description of a highwayman ; an announcement of a grand cock-fight between two persons of honour ; and an advertisement offering a reward for a strayed dog. The whole made up two pages of moderate size. Whatever was communicated respecting matters of the highest moment was communicated in the most meagre and formal style. Sometimes, indeed, when the Government was disposed to gratify the public curiosity respecting an important transaction, a broadside was put forth giving fuller details than could be found in the *Gazette* ; but neither the *Gazette*, nor any supplementary broadside, printed by authority, ever contained any intelligence which it did not suit the purposes of the Court to publish. The most important Parliamentary debates, the most important State trials recorded in our history, were passed over in profound silence.”



I have quoted the words of Lord Macaulay in relation to the character of the *London Gazette* about this period of English history. In all that he says respecting it I concur, after having perused the numbers issued in its earlier years. As it was then, so it is now, 1871,—an official journal. The reader will probably feel an interest in what it said respecting the Great London Fire of 1666. The following is the account which it gave of that great metropolitan conflagration, probably the greatest of which we have any record in the history of the world. The *London Gazette*, describing this fire, says:—

On the second instant at one of the clock in the Morning there happened to break out a sad and deplorable Fire, in *Pudding-lane* near *New Fish-street*, which falling out at that hour of the night, and in a quarter of the town so close built with wooden pitched houses, spread itself so far before day, and with such distraction to the inhabitants and neighbours, that care was not taken for the timely preventing the further effusion of it by pulling down houses, as ought to have been: so that this lamentable Fire in a short time became too big to be mastered by any Engines or working near it. It fell out most unhappily, too, that a violent Easterly wind fomented it, and kept it burning all that day, and the night following spreading itself up to *Grace-church-street*, and downwards from *Cannon-street* to the Water-side as far as the *Three Cranes in the Vintrey*.

The people in all parts about it distracted by the vastness of it, and their particular care to carry away their goods, many attempts were made to prevent the spreading of it, by pulling down houses, and making great intervals, but all in vain, the Fire seising upon the timber and rubbish, and so continuing itself, even through those spaces, and raging in a bright flame all Monday and Tuesday,

notwithstanding His Majesties own, and His Royal Highness's indefatigable and personal pains to apply all possible means to prevent it, calling upon and helping the people with their guards; and a great number of nobility and gentry unweariedly assisting therein, for which they were requited with a thousand blessings from the poor distressed people. By the favour of God the wind slackened a little on Tuesday night, and the flames meeting with Brick-buildings at the Temple, by little and little it was observed to lose its force on that side, so that on Wednesday morning we began to hope well, and his Royal Highness never despairing or slackning his personal care wrought so well that day, assisted in some parts by the Lords of the Councel before and behind it, that a stop was put to it at the *Temple Church*, near *Holborn bridge*, *Pie-corner Aldersgate*, *Cripplegate*, near the lower end of *Coleman-street*, at the end of *Basing-hall-street*, by the *Postern*, at the upper end of *Bishopsgate-street*, and *Leadenhall-street*, at the *Standard* in *Cornhill*, at the Church in *Fanchurch-street*, near *Clothworkers-hall* in *Mincing-lane*, at the middle of *Mark-lane*, and at the *Tower-dock*.

This account of the Great Fire of London will be read with interest as a simple or literal narrative of that terrible conflagration, and in that respect differing from the eloquent descriptions given by Hume, Macaulay, and other historians of that vast and destructive conflagration—the greatest, I repeat, that ever occurred in an extensive and populous town. No one can read the above description of the Great Fire of London without imagining for the moment, owing to certain phrases in the report, that the description of the official journal was written by some of the penny-a-liners of our day,—a class of the community respecting whom I shall have to

furnish some interesting particulars in a future chapter of this work.

The newspapers of the seventeenth century were permitted, until the time of Charles II., to be published without being licensed by the Government of the day; but in the reign of that despotic sovereign, a law was passed prohibiting the publication of any newspaper without being duly licensed. The frequent scurrilous personalities, the profanities, and the indecencies which were indulged in, in conjunction with the rancour of party spirit which prevailed at that period, were made the principal pleas for a resort on the part of the Government to this expedient of prohibiting the publication of any newspaper not duly licensed. The adoption of a law authorizing this course was proposed by Archbishop Laud, who had himself, and the party of whom he was the leader, been fiercely denounced and in every way held up to public ridicule and scorn. The same prelate prevailed on Government to issue a decree limiting the number of master printers in London to *twenty*, and rendering any one printing any newspaper or pamphlet of news without a license, liable to be placed in the pillory and publicly whipped. What, it may well be wondered, would be the position of London at the present time, either as regards newspapers or books, were the means of producing them to be restricted to twenty printing establishments! Just now the number of master printers in the metropolis cannot be much less than 500, while the average number of

hands in their employ cannot be under 50, making in all 25,000 persons employed in some shape or other in the printing establishments of London.

Of course the proposal to establish a system having for its object to cripple, if not crush, the Press by means of prohibiting any paper being published without being licensed, met with the ready concurrence of the then Parliament, if Parliament it might be called. And no sooner had the law passed, than Sir John Birkenhead, before referred to as one of the three men whom Disraeli the elder called the fathers of the English press, was appointed to the office of Licenser of the Press. But he was soon succeeded by Sir Roger l'Estrange.

I have alluded in my first chapter to the fact that Sir Roger l'Estrange was one who had been long and intimately connected with the newspaper press of the day. He had several newspapers of his own when he accepted the knighthood, and the appointment to the office of Licenser of the Newspaper Press. It might have been supposed that this consideration would have had at least some effect in the way of leading him to practise a little leniency towards the proprietors of existing papers, or those who might apply for new licenses. But the fact was otherwise. No sooner was he installed in the office, than he proved himself a renegade to the liberal principles, so far as the press was concerned, on which he had traded for a long series of years. In the prospectus to the first number of the *Intelligencer*, which he

started in his new capacity of Licensor of the Press, he treated his readers with supreme contempt, and unblushingly announced to all existing papers, and to those new ones which might hereafter be proposed, that he was determined to subject them to a most rigorous and even repressive system of surveillance. This of course he did, as all tyrannical minions of governments invariably do, in the name of "his Most Sacred Majesty," and with the view of promoting the cause of order and insuring the protection of government from the undue meddling on the part of the press with the affairs of State.

It is due, however, to this Roger l'Estrange to say that, as an editor of newspapers, he displayed more tact and talent than any of his contemporaries; but unfortunately he was a man whom no one who knew his antecedents could respect, and he was consequently held in universal odium. During the twenty years before he received this appointment, which he devoted to the support of the cause of royalty, he was a strenuous advocate of the liberty of the press; but he had so often transformed its liberty into licentiousness, that it is believed that six of those twenty years were spent in prison, and nearly four under sentence of death in Newgate. Yet the moment he found he was beyond the reach of danger, through the Restoration of Charles II., he applied himself with a vigour and rancour, which were the two principal qualities in his nature, to frame a plan, with the view of submitting it to Parliament, to

destroy the liberty of the press altogether. By this time, I ought to mention, Roger l'Estrange was either fairly installed in his new office, or was certain of receiving the appointment. The severity of the restrictions he recommended, and the means he proposed for their effectual enforcement, clearly showed their author to be possessed of a sagacity and ingenuity which had hardly ever been surpassed in the cause of despotism. His scheme was so comprehensive that it included in its penalties the writer or editor, the stationer who supplied the paper, the type-founder who furnished the type, the compositors, the smiths, the carpenters, or any other mechanics who worked on the printing presses,—persons, too, who hawked, delivered, or in any way vended the publications which it was sought to sell. Any one acting in either of these capacities, without special license, was to be subject to a heavy penalty. The number of printing presses was also to be reduced—say in London, from sixty to twenty—and the number of persons employed in the several master printers' establishments was to be lessened in a corresponding proportion.

It may seem strange to us, that while the newspapers of the day were not named in the elaborate pamphlet in which Roger l'Estrange submitted his sentiments and suggestions to Parliament as to the necessity of destroying the liberty of the press, and the readiest and most effectual way in which that could be done,—it was obviously the existing



political journalism at which his whole scheme was directed. Newspapers were, in the days of the Restoration, usually called pamphlets, books, and papers; and these words figure abundantly in the pages of Roger l'Estrange's production.

Some of the penalties whereby this Royalist minion proposed to carry out his ingenious scheme for destroying the liberty of the press, are deserving of record. The first enumerates those punishments which were already employed. Among them were "death, mutilation, imprisonment, banishment, corporal pains, disgrace, &c." One would think that there were penalties among these sufficiently severe for any conceivable offence which one could commit. Roger l'Estrange thought differently. After enlarging the above list of penalties, at the time in use, by adding to it the "pillory, stocks, whipping, carting, standing under the gallows, with a rope about the neck, at a public execution,—wearing some badge of infamy, or condemned to work in mines," he goes on mercifully to suggest, that after those he has named have been duly applied to the offending parties, "more may be added." And yet, in the face of these terrible penalties and perils, there were during the Restoration a succession of the friends of freedom who bore the severest sufferings and braved the greatest dangers in their unquenchable zeal for the liberty of the press,—which they clearly saw to be indissolubly connected with the cause of civil and religious liberty in general. The memory of the most

noble army of martyrs who valiantly fought for the freedom of the press in the reigns of Charles I. and Charles II., ought to be, and will be, held in everlasting and sacred remembrance.

But the reader will be desirous to know what became in the end of this Roger l'Estrange, who is said to have been the first newspaper writer who openly sold himself for pay to the party dominant in the State. His was the common, if not the uniform fate of all recreants and servile flatterers of the powers that be, whether in political or social life. The measure which he meted out as Licenser of the Press was ultimately meted out to himself in the early days of the Revolution of 1688. He was committed to Newgate for publishing treasonable papers against the government. This was three years after he had been knighted by James II. He lived till 1704, and died in his eighty-eighth year, unregretted by the public, notwithstanding his eminent classical attainments and the superior general abilities of which he had proved himself to be possessed during a long journalistic and official career.



## CHAPTER III.

### THE NEWSPAPER PRESS IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.—PART SECOND.

Curious Advertisements—Various Specimens—Charles the First—Royal “Touching” for the Curing of the King’s Evil—Dr. Johnson “Touched” by Queen Anne—Female Pugilism—Number of Class Journals—More Curious Newspaper Titles.

THE *Quarterly Review*, in one of its volumes published some sixteen or seventeen years ago, devoted a considerable portion of its space to the subject of the advertisements which appeared in the newspaper press of the seventeenth century; and the specimens it gives of their character are certainly, in many instances, very curious, as illustrative of the manners and customs of the times, as well as showing the character of the journalism of the period. The *Quarterly* bears out what I have stated in my first chapter, that though the clumsy forger of the *English Mercuries* of 1588—the time of the Spanish Armada’s intended invasion of these shores—inserted a goodly number of miscellaneous advertisements in each of his seven spurious *Mercuries*, no instance is on record of any advertisement being inserted in any of the newspapers of the day prior to the year 1652. The first *weekly* newspaper previous to this date—for all the journals were brought

out at uncertain intervals—published in London, made its appearance, as I have before mentioned, under the title of the *Weekly News*, in the year 1622; and though it aimed at being, and certainly was, much more of a newspaper, according to our modern notions on the subject, than any of its predecessors or contemporaries, it did not contain an intimation or notification of any kind which bore the shadow of a resemblance to an advertisement. The *Quarterly* reviewer, after stating that it was not until subsequent to the death of Charles I., and when the Commonwealth had found time to breathe, that the people discovered the use of the press as a means of making known their wants and of giving publicity to their wares, proceeds to mention that after an active search among the earliest newspapers, the following is the first advertisement he found:—

Monodia Gratiolari, an Heroic Poem; being a Congratulatory Panegyric for my Lord General's late Return; Summing up his Successes in an Exquisite Manner. To be sold by John Holden, in the New Exchange, London. Printed by Tho. Newcourt, 1652.

The title of the paper in which this advertisement appeared was the *Mercurius Politicus*. I have imitated the example set by the writer in the *Quarterly*, and examined in the vaults of the British Museum many journals of a previous date to that on which the copy of the newspaper containing the above advertisement was published, and with the same result,—that is to say, I have met with no instance in which, prior

to this, any advertisements appeared in the newspapers which were published before the beginning of the second half of the seventeenth century.

The writer in the *Quarterly* may be right in stating that this, the earliest of at least literary newspaper advertisements, so far as is known, "is evidently a piece of flattery to Cromwell upon his victories in Ireland;" but it is a very ungenerous insinuation, and without the semblance of a foundation in fact, to add, that "it might have been inserted at the instigation of the great Commonwealth leader himself." Cromwell was a man incapable of anything so unworthy.

It is right I should here state, that, contrary to the opinion of the *Quarterly Review*, this is the earliest advertisement known as having appeared in an English newspaper. It is stated in a work entitled "History of British Journalism," published twelve years ago by Mr. Alexander Andrews, that Mr. Nichols found in the first number of the *Impartial Intelligencer*, dated March 1st to 7th, 1648, an advertisement from a gentleman at Candish, in Suffolk, offering a reward for two horses that had been stolen from him. It is impossible for me authoritatively to contradict this statement; but as the point at issue is curious, we are justified in not receiving it in the absence of some better evidence than is presented to us. The writer in the *Quarterly* had evidently been at every conceivable pains to be correct in his statements, and I am still disposed to trust in his accuracy.

Among the earliest newspaper advertisements of books, there is the following one in the September number of the same journal for 1659, which is what would be now-a-days called an "announcement" of a new publication, from no less a person than the author of "Paradise Lost:"—

Considerations touching the likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church; wherein is also Discoursed of Tithes, Church Fees, Church Revenues, and whether any Maintenance of Ministers can be settled by Law. The Author, J. M. Sold by Lemuell Chapman, at the Crown in Pope's Head Alley.

How very strange it must seem to us, that anything from one of the greatest poets the world ever produced, and at the same time the most powerful writer that ever employed his pen in the department of prose,—should be introduced to the reading public in this unostentatious manner—"The Author, J. M." Only imagine this to be all that is said about a new production from the pen of John Milton! No one can read this advertisement without feeling a desire to know whether or not the reading public of the period would have at once discerned the great Milton under the initials "J. M." Assuredly, anything more unpretending could not have been penned, than this advertisement of a production from one whose reputation was even at this time co-extensive with the English language, although the grand poem, the "Paradise Lost," had not yet appeared to fill the world with his fame.

In the following year, 1660, almost contemporaneously with the arrival of Charles II. and his adherents at Dover, another advertisement appeared in the same *Mercurius Politicus*, of another production, in the pamphlet form, from the pen of the same "J. M.," who, it ought to be observed, was by this time totally blind. Here is the advertisement:—

The Ready and Easy Way to establish a True Commonwealth; and the Excellence thereof compared with the Inconveniences and Dangers of Re-admitting Kingship in this Nation. The Author, J. M. Wherein by Reason of the Printer's Haste, the Errata not coming in Time, it is desired that the following Faults may be Amended—Page 9, line 32, for *the Areopagus*, read *of Areopagus*; page 10, line 3, for 'full Senate,' true Senate; line 4, for fits, is the whole Aristocracy; line 7, for Provincial States, States of every City. Page 176, line 9, for *cite*, *citie*; line 30, for *left*, *felt*. Sold by Lemuel Chapman, at the Crown in Pope's Head Alley.

No one can fail to read with a melancholy interest this proof of the great Milton's solicitude, blind as he then was, to have corrected the few errors which appear to have occurred in his pamphlet. And the sadness of the feeling with which we contemplate the fact is greatly heightened by the consideration, that within a few months of the time at which he so courageously wrote this pamphlet and corrected these errors, he was a proscribed fugitive, and sought for the safety of his person—very probably of his life—from the myrmidons of Charles, in the shelter afforded him by a friend in an obscure house in Westminster

—his works, meanwhile, and this one among the number, being publicly burned at the hands of the common hangman.

Among the curious advertisements which appeared in the journals of this period, there was one published in the *Kingdom's Intelligencer*, which possesses some interest because it relates to a book which has since then obtained a universal and seemingly enduring popularity. The book to which I allude is "Hudibras." The advertisement respecting that work is as follows:—

There is stolen abroad a most false and imperfect edition of a Poem, called "Hudibras," without name either of printer or bookseller, as fit for so lame and spurious an impression. The true and perfect edition, printed by the Author's original, is sold by Richard Marriot, under St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet Street. That other nameless impression is a cheat, and will but abuse the buyer as well as the Author, whose Poem deserves to have fallen into better hands.

As time passed away the newspaper advertisements became more varied in their character; but for a few years after this period they were chiefly confined to what might be called a literary class of notices,—that is, advertisements of new books; but in the year 1660, in the *Mercurius Politicus*, under date May 31st, we find the following lengthened and minute description of a female thief and runaway, along with other advertisements of a very miscellaneous kind. The *Hue and Cry* of our present police offices could hardly be more minute in its description of the parties sought, than were this class of advertisements of two



centuries ago,—of which the subjoined is a specimen, and which were not uncommon at that time:—

A black-haired maid, of a middle stature, thick-set, having her face full marked with the small-pox, calling herself by the name of Nan or Agnes Hobson, did, upon Monday the 28th of May, about six o'clock in the morning, steal away from her ladies house in the Pall Mall a mingle-coloured wrought tabby gown of deer colour and white; a black striped satin gown with four broad bone black silk laces, and a plain black watered French tabby gown; also, one scarlet coloured and one other pink coloured sarcenet petticoat, and a white watered tabby waistcoat, plain; several sarcenet, mode, and thin black hoods and scarfs, several fine holland shirts, a laced pair of cuffs and dressing, one pair of pink coloured worsted stockings, a silver spoon, a leather bag, &c. She went away in greyish cloth waistcoat turned, and a pink coloured paragon upper petticoat, with a green tammy under one. If any shall give notice of this person, or things, at one Hopkins, a Shoemaker's, next door to the Vine Tavern, near the Pall Mall end, near Charing Cross; or at Mr. Ostler's, at the Bull Head, in Cornhill, near the Old Exchange, they shall be rewarded for their pains.

This class of advertisements bore a large proportion to the others, from which the fair inference is, that such minute details of the personal appearance of the runaways led, in at least a fair proportion of cases, to their capture. It has been justly noticed by a writer on the newspaper journalism of the latter part of the seventeenth century, that, judging from what appeared in the descriptions of runaways in the newspapers of the period, the small-pox must have been, at least among the lower classes, all but universal, and



its ravages of a terrible nature. Thieves and run-aways are in nearly every instance described as having faces frightfully disfigured by the severity of the small-pox.

Among many instructive facts illustrative of the customs and manners of this period of our history, which are incidentally brought out by the newspaper advertisements of the time, there is one which will cause no small surprise. Until the year 1633 there was no such thing as regular postal communication with the various parts of the country. Queen Elizabeth, it is true, had in her day organized means whereby Government communications could be, and were, kept up between all the leading parts of the kingdom; but no one unconnected with the State could share in any way in the benefits of this postal organization. In the year, however, I have mentioned, what had hitherto been a purely government post was extended into a public one. It travelled night and day, at the rate of seven miles per hour, a very fair rate of speed, considering what the dreadful state of the roads is known, from all accounts, to have been at that period in our history.

But even then the means of public communication between the various counties were limited to what consisted of letters and despatches. It was not until the middle of the seventeenth century that passenger travelling by stage coaches was known. The writer before referred to in the *Quarterly Review* states that

the following is the first intimation he has met with of the establishment of a stage-coach :—

From the 26th day of April, 1658, there will continue to go Stage Coaches from the George Inn, without Aldersgate, London, unto the several Cities and Towns, for the rates and at the times hereafter mentioned and declared.

Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

To Salisbury in two days for 20 shillings. To Blanford and Dorchester in two days and a half for 30 shillings. To Burput in three days for 30 shillings. To Exmaster, Hunnington, and Exeter in four days for 40 shillings.

To Stamford in two days for 20 shillings. To Newark in two days and a half for 25 shillings. To Bawtrej in three days for 30 shillings. To Doncaster and Ferribridge for 35 shillings. To York in four days for 40 shillings.

Monday and Wednesday to Ockinton and Plymouth for one shilling.

Every Monday to Helperby and Northallerton for 45 shillings. To Darneton and Ferryhill for 1 shilling. To Durham for 55 shillings. To Newcastle for 3 pounds.

Once every fortnight to Edinburgh for 4 pounds apiece. Mondays.

Every Friday to Wakefield in four days, 40 shillings.

All persons who desire to travel unto the Cities, Towns, and Roads herein hereafter mentioned and expressed, namely — to Coventry, Litchfield, Stone, Namptwich, Chester, Warrington, Wiggan, Chorley, Preston, Garstang, Lancaster, and Kendal; and also to Stamford, Grantham, Newark, Tuxford, Bawtrej, Doncaster, Ferribridge, York, Helperby, Northallerton, Darneton, Ferryhill, Durham and Newcastle, Wakefield, Leeds, and Halifax; and also to Salisbury, Blanford, Dorchester, Burput, Exmaster, Hunnington, and Exeter, Ockinton, Plymouth, and Cornwall; let them repair to the George Inn at Holborn Bridge, London, and thence they shall be in good coaches with

good horses, upon every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, at and for reasonable rates.

Every one who is conversant with the history of Charles II., is acquainted with the fact of his extraordinary affection for dogs. Pepys, in his "Diary," gives a graphic account of his appearance in the Park, accompanied by a train of the canine tribe. He was, in connexion with some of his favourite dogs, among the earliest to turn the newspapers to account as mediums of advertising. In the *Mercurius Publicus*, which, as the myrmidon of the restored monarch, had changed its name for that of the *Mercurius Politicus*, we find the following notification in its number for June 28th, 1660, relative to a lost favourite dog:—

A smooth black dog, less than a greyhound, with white under his breast, belonging to the King's Majesty, was taken from Whitehall the eighteenth of this instant June, or thereabouts. If any one can give notice to John Elles, one of his Majesty's servants, or to his Majesty's Back Stairs, shall be well rewarded for their labour.

The expression, "his Majesty's Back Stairs," is not, in its present connexion, intelligible to me. The expression is one of sufficiently frequent occurrence in the present day, but its accepted meaning with us is, the employment of some underhand influence at Court. However, let that pass. The value which Charles attached to the dog which was the subject of this advertisement must have been great, and its royal owner must have been seized with a sense of the ultimate efficacy of advertising, for we find him, in

the very next number of the same journal, repeating the expression of his anxiety to recover his lost canine favourite. In this case there is something so out of the common-place mode of advertising, even in those days of odd advertisements, that a conjecture has been ventured, that the subjoined original and racy announcement must have been penned by a no less distinguished writer than the monarch himself. That indeed was the prevalent belief at the time. Here is the second advertisement concerning this "smooth black dog, less than a greyhound," and the reader will form his own opinion as to whether or not the authorship is royal:—

We must call upon you again for a black dog, between a greyhound and a spaniel, no white about him only a streak on his breast, and tail a little bobbed. It is his Majesty's own dog, and doubtless was stolen, for the dog was not born nor bred in England, and would never forsake his master. Whoever finds him may acquaint any at Whitehall, for the dog was better known at Court than those who stole him. Will they never leave robbing his Majesty? Must he not keep a dog? This dog's place (though better than some imagine) is the only place which nobody offers to beg.

If I were to offer an opinion as to the authorship of this advertisement, I would be disposed to ascribe it to a kingly pen, because I should deem it impossible that any one else than Charles himself would have ventured to use the familiarity with that monarch's name which pervades every line, and almost, indeed, every word. There is much forcible humour in it.

Nothing could be better than the observation that the dog was better known at Court than those who stole him; while the prevailing corruption and obsequiousness at Court are felicitously hit off by the concluding observation that "this dog's place (though better than some imagine) is the only place which nobody offers to beg." If the parasites of the second Charles's day, only knew how comfortable the place of his "smooth black dog" was, there would have been a legion of persons about Court envious of it, and, in the event of a vacancy, candidates for it.

In an advertisement which appeared two years before this time, namely, in the *Mercurius Politicus* of September 30th, 1658, we have the first intimation of tea being sold in grocers' shops. The advertisement is short, but strongly commendatory of the recently-imported China leaf. It is as follows:—

That excellent and by all Physicians approved Chinese Drink called by the Chineans Tsha, by other nations *Tay*, *alias Tee*, is sold at the Sultane's Head Coffee House, in Sweeting's Rents, by the Royal Exchange, London.

Nothing, it will be observed, is here said respecting the price of the tea thus offered for sale; but we know that twenty years from this time the article was so scarce that the best green cost 10*l.* per lb., and the most inferior never was sold for less than 5*l.* per lb. In the year 1657, a merchant of the name of Thomas Garraway obtained a portion of a large cargo, which was received from China; and he established a wholesale house for the sale of the new commodity. The

house so established in 1657 still exists, and carries on an extensive business under the altered name of "Garraway's Coffee House." There can be no doubt that the advertisement which I have just quoted, offering tea for sale, derived its supplies to retail from Garraway's wholesale establishment. Previous to the introduction of tea into use among the upper classes, the standard beverage at common meals was ale. What would be thought now-a-day of duchesses and their daughters having their flowing tankards of home-brewed ale lying on their breakfast tables, and doing ample justice to them in the way of reducing their contents?

Among the earliest to take advantage of the new mode of offering their commodities for sale were the venders of quack medicines. These empirics seem to have been essentially the same class of persons, in their mode of doing business, as those of the present day. It would not be easy to surpass in 1871, in point of cleverness, the following advertisement in the journal before quoted, and dated 1660:—

Gentlemen, you are desired to take notice, that Mr. Theophilus Buckworth doth at his house on Mile-end Green make and expose to sale, for the public good, those so famous lozenges or Pectorals approved for the cure of Consumptions, Coughs, Catarrhs, Asthmas, Hoarsness, Strongness of Breath, Colds in general, Diseases incident to the Lungs, and a sovereign Antidote against the plague, and all other contagious Diseases, and obstructions of the Stomach; And for more convenience of the people, constantly leaveth them sealed up with his coat of arms on the papers, with Mr.



Rich. Lowndes (as formerly), at the sign of the White Lion, near the little North door of Paul's Church; Mr. Henry Seile, over against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet Street; Mr. William Milward at Westminster Hall Gate; Mr. John Place, at Furnival's Inn Gate in Holborn; and Mr. Robert Horn, at the Turk's-head near the entrance of the Royal Exchange, Booksellers, and no others.

It will not fail to strike the modern reader, that the same expedient, resorted to universally nowadays by quack doctors and quack medicine venders, of denouncing all but themselves as pretenders, was more than two hundred years ago had recourse to. How true it is that human nature is essentially the same in all ages and countries. We also see in the above, that flesh was, in 1660, heir to the same ills as in 1871. Among the ills of two centuries ago we find that toothache had a prominent place; but if the advertisement of an empiric of that day might be believed, and his specific were used, that consummation of all the ills of life, might and would be prevented. Just listen to this master of what he calls "dentrifices:"—

Most excellent and approved Dentrifices to scour and cleanse the Teeth, making them white as Ivory, preserves from the Toothache; so that, being constantly used, the parties using it are never troubled with the toothache: It fastens the Teeth, sweetens the Breath, and preserves the Gums and Mouth from Cankers and Imposthumes. Made by Robert Turner, Gentleman; and the right are only to be had at Thomas Rookes, Stationer, at the Holy Lamb at the east end of St. Paul's Church, near the School, in sealed papers, at 12d. the paper.



But of all the empiricism the world ever witnessed, there is nothing to surpass in pretence the fact, that Charles I. actually caused an advertisement to be published in one of the newspapers of the day, that he could cure by a touch of his royal person scrofula,—a disease which, since that period, has been known by the name of king's evil. The following advertisement appears in the *Public Intelligencer* of 1644:—

Whitehall, May 14, 1644. His Sacred Majesty having declared it to be his Royal will and purpose to continue the healing of his people for the Evil during the Month of May, and then to give over till Michaelmas next, I am commanded to give notice thereof, that the people may not come up to town in the interim, and lose their labour.

This is deplorable. One is at a loss whether we ought to marvel most at the conduct of the King, or the credulity of the people. Did he deceive his subjects, or was he deceived himself? I see his conduct in this matter recently denounced by a high literary authority as a piece of rank charlatanism. I cannot bring myself to take this view of the conduct of Charles. I fancy he brought himself to believe, by some mental process or other, that he possessed the power of curing scrofula diseases by his royal touch. He was the reverse of a man of robust mind; and I cannot see any reason why he should not have the same faith in his healing powers, in relation to this particular disease, as multitudes of his subjects, suffering from the disease, confessedly had.

Besides, it is to be remembered that Charles I. was not the only sovereign that believed to have had delegated to himself this power of curing the king's evil. It only ceased to be claimed and exercised by English sovereigns on the death of Queen Anne. She herself appointed particular times for receiving and "touching" persons from all parts of the provinces, who were the subjects of that disease.

But though the ceremony of giving the royal touch with a view to the curing of the king's evil ceased in this country with the demise of Queen Anne, it continued to be practised abroad by the old Pretender. We find the following paragraph in the *Flying Post*, a London journal, of April 23, 1728, under the heading "Bologna, April 17:"—

On Saturday, the Princess of Planburo paid a visit to the Chevalier de St. George and his lady, who received her very affectionately. Next day the Pretender performed the ceremony of touching in his chapel.

Nothing is said with regard to the result of the "touch."

In our day one can have no idea of the prevalence, for centuries, of the belief in all parts of the country, and among all classes, of the efficacy of the royal touch for the cure of the king's evil. But what is more surprising still in connexion with the matter, is the fact, that many of the most intelligent and eminent physicians of the different reigns in which it was practised, appear to have had full faith in it. This is proved by the number of patients they sent from

the provinces to the capital to be royally cured. Among these was no less noted a person than Dr. Johnson. He was brought to London when five years of age—not two and a-half years, as is stated in “*The Book of Days*”—at the recommendation of Sir John Meyer, then a distinguished physician in Lichfield, to be “touched” by Queen Anne; and he received the royal touch along with no fewer than two hundred others, on the 30th March, 1714. The fact that this large number was so “touched” on that day is duly recorded in the then existing newspapers. I may add that, in after life, in answer to the question, whether he remembered Queen Anne, he said that he had “a confused, but a somewhat solemn sort of recollection of a lady in diamonds, and a long peach hood.” But perhaps the most extraordinary fact of all in connexion with the belief in the efficacy of the “Royal touch,” to cure the king’s evil, is that in the *Book of Common Prayer*, printed and published in Queen Anne’s time, there was a form of service in relation to it in which there is a distinct expression by the collective clergy of that day of their belief in the efficacy of the royal touch in curing the disease in question.

Matrimonial alliances were not forgotten in the advertisements of the times of which I am speaking, any more than they are in our own. Here is one specimen of a matrimonial advertisement, which I know appeared in a journal published between 1680 and 1690, although I am unable to give the exact date:—

I know (says the advertiser) of several men and women whose friends would gladly have them matched, which I'll endeavour to do, as from time to time I shall hear of such whose circumstances are likely to agree; and I'll assure such as will come to me it shall be done with all the honour and secrecy imaginable. Their own parents shall not manage it more to their satisfaction; and the more comes to me the better I shall be able to serve them.

In this last sentence there is an adroit combination of philosophy and business. Of course, in proportion to the number of candidates of either sex for matrimonial bliss that presented themselves at the apartments of this marriage-maker, there would be the greater variety from which to choose. If only two or three made their appearance on either side, the chances of being suited, whether as husband or wife, would have been few compared with the chances in the event of this mediator between single men and single women, being able to produce his forty or fifty aspirants of either sex to connubial bliss.

Theology in MS. was, it would appear, at this time, as now, a marketable commodity:—

If (says one advertiser) any divine, or their relicts, have complete sets of MS. sermons upon the Epistles and Gospels, the Catechisms, or Festivals, I can help to a customer.

We meet among these curious advertisements of nearly two centuries ago, one which, it is to be hoped, is an unjustifiable reflection on the musical profession of that day. "If," says the party inserting the advertisement, "I can meet with a sober man that

has a counter-tenor voice, I can help him to a place worth thirty pounds the year or more." Was, then, drunkenness so common a vice two hundred years ago that a party desirous of meeting with a sober man felt constrained to put the case hypothetically? Charity would lead us to hope that the advertisement is a calumny on the musical profession of the period.

I may here pause for a moment parenthetically to remark, that among the advertisements which were most common towards the close of the seventeenth century, and which became more common afterwards, —increasing in number throughout the eighteenth century, were a class which were headed "Sales by the Candle." Though this heading in the public journals has ceased to appear, it was a leading feature in a paper then called the *Public Ledger*, afterwards the *Guardian*, until so late as thirty-six years ago. I remember on coming to London, in 1833, being greatly puzzled to know what the phrase "Sales by the Candle" meant, which met my eye every morning in the journal I have just mentioned, but no one could give me a satisfactory answer to the question. That which I most frequently received was to the effect, that the particular Mincing Lane commodities, of which the sales for the most part consisted, had originally been sold by candlelight.

The answer was not satisfactory, but I never could find any one more so, until early in the present year I found an answer in the "Diary of Samuel Pepys." The solution of what had always been to me, and I

believe every one else, a great mystery, is thus given by Pepys, in his "Diary," under date September 3rd, 1662. The sales, I should mention, were by auction :—

After dinner we met and sold the Weymouth, Success, and Fellowship hulkes, where pleasant to see how backward men are at first to bid the most ; and yet, when the candle is going out, how they bawl, and dispute afterwards who bid the most. And here I observed one man cunninger than the rest, that was sure to bid the last man, and to carry it ; and inquiring the reason, he told me that, just as the flame goes out, the smoke descends, which is a thing I never observed before, and by that he do know the instant when to bid last.

In more modern phraseology the meaning of " Sales by Candlelight," was simply that the bidding and the auction were over the moment the candle extinguished itself, which had been lighted, though in open day, at the commencement of the proceedings.

Among the advertisements which appeared in the *London Gazette* of December 22nd, 1679, there was one which will be found interesting to all literary men. It relates to a gross assault committed on John Dryden, one of the most eminent poets of that period, and one whose writings are still read with admiration. The following is the advertisement :—

Whereas John Dryden, Esq., was, on Monday, the 18th instant, at night, barbarously assaulted and wounded in Rose Street, in Covent Garden, by divers men unknown ; if any person shall make discovery of the said offenders to the said Mr. Dryden, or to any Justice of the Peace, he shall not



only receive Fifty Pounds, which is deposited in the hands of Mr. Blanchard, goldsmith, next door to Temple Bar, for the said purpose, but if he be a principal or accessory in the said deed His Majesty is graciously pleased to promise him his pardon for the same.

I have seen a paragraph in another journal published a few days after the number of the *London Gazette* in which this advertisement appears, and in this paragraph a belief is expressed that the brutal outrage on Dryden was not committed with a view to robbery, but by Roman Catholics, and solely from religious considerations, Dryden having, at that time, as he often did, attacked the Popery of the day. But as we are all interested in anything which relates to Dryden, I will give the version of another writer of this affair. He assigns an additional reason for the assault. The *Mercurius Domesticus, or News both from City and Country*, refers to this maltreatment of Dryden in these terms:—

Upon the 18th instant in the evening Mr. *Dryden*, the great poet, was set upon in *Rose-street* in *Covent Garden*, by three persons, who, calling him rogue, and other offensive names, knocked him down and dangerously wounded him, but upon his crying out murther, they made their escape; it is conceived that they had their pay beforehand, and designed not to rob him but to execute on him some *Feminine* if not *Popish* vengeance.

With the commencement of the eighteenth century the system of advertising in the newspapers of the day became greatly extended. Some of these public notices were of a kind which, were they to appear



now, would create no small astonishment. They would be deemed novelties indeed. In a paper called the *Postman*, dated July 4th, 1701, we find the following :—

A trial of skill to be performed at His Majesty's Bear Garden, in Hockley-in-the-Hole, on Thursday next, being the 9th instant, between these following masters,—Mr. Edmund Button, master of the noble science of defence, who hath lately cut down Mr. Hasgit and the Champion of the West, and 4 besides, and James Harris, an Herefordshire man, master of the noble science of defence, who has fought 98 persons and never was worsted, to exercise the usual weapons, at two o'clock in the afternoon precisely.

Exhibitions of the “noble science of defence,” or in other words, prize-fights, were, a few years since, sufficiently common in our own day, but we do not remember to have seen a public intimation of any pugilist making it a matter of boast, and an attraction to a forthcoming prize-fight, that he had “cut down” a champion of the West, and “four besides.”

But public exhibitions of pugilism in its most ruffianly forms were not, it seems, at this time—not certainly at twenty years later—confined to our own sex. Women, as well as men, at that time entered the ring. The following appears in a public journal. The day of the month, nor the month itself, is not given, but the date of the paper in which the advertisement appears is 1722 :—

Challenge :—I, Elizabeth Wilkinson, of Clerkenwell, having had some words with Hannah Ryfield, and requiring satisfaction, do write her to meet me upon the stage, and

box me for three guineas; each woman holding half-a-crown in each hand, and the first woman that drops the money to lose the battle.

It will be observed that in this "challenge," there is a curious mingling of feelings of revenge and monetary considerations. Elizabeth Wilkinson, seeks and hopes to accomplish both purposes. The "challenge" was promptly accepted by the party to whom it was addressed. Here is the acceptance by Hannah Ryfield, and it was pronounced by the admirers of pugilism of either sex of that day, to have displayed great "pluck."

Answer:—I, Hannah Ryfield, of Newgate Market, hearing of the resolutions of Elizabeth Wilkinson, will not fail, God willing, to give her more blows than words, desiring home blows, and from her no favour; she may expect a good thumping.

Whether any report appeared of this great female pugilistic exhibition in any of the sporting journals of the day, I have no means of knowing.

Availing myself of another extraordinary disinterment made by a writer in the *Quarterly Review*, from the newspaper advertisements of a hundred and forty years ago, I can imagine the mingled amazement and semi-incredulity with which the following will be read:—

At Mr. Stokes' Amphitheatre in Islington Road, this present Monday, being the 7th October, will be a complete Boxing Match by the two following Championesses:—

Whereas I, Ann Field, of Stoke Newington, ass-driver,

well known for my abilities in boxing in my own defence whenever it happened in my way, having been affronted by Mrs. Stokes, styled the European Championess, do fairly invite her to a trial of her best skill in boxing for £10, fair rise and fall; and question not but to give her such proofs of my judgment that shall oblige her to acknowledge me Championess of the Stage, to the entire satisfaction of all my friends.

I, Elizabeth Stokes, of the City of London, have not fought in this way since I fought the famous boxing-woman of Billingsgate 29 minutes, and gained a complete victory (which is six years ago); but as the famous Stoke Newington ass-woman dares me to fight her for the £10: I do assure her I will not fail meeting her for the said sum, and doubt not that the blows which I shall present her with will be more difficult for her to digest than any she ever gave her asses.

So that in these days we not only had champions but "championesses" in the "noble science of self-defence." It is difficult to say whether we ought to regard with greater disgust the women who could have thus made such a brutal public exhibition of themselves, or those who could have been spectators of so revolting a sight. The very fact too, that such advertisements as these should have appeared in the public journals, at once illustrates the low tone of the newspapers of a century and a half ago, and the tone and taste of the public mind of that day.

Private scandal appears to have been about this time rife among the better classes of society, judging from the many allusions made to the fact both in advertisements and paragraphs. At a later

period, Sir Richard Steele, by way of trying the effect of ridicule on this practice of private scandal in the better classes of society, announced in the *Tatler*, in the form of an ordinary advertisement, that he had provided a box at the publishing office of that journal, for the express purpose of secretly receiving from ladies, any contributions of a scandalous nature respecting other ladies, which they might wish to be published.

Among the advertisements of this time were many announcing the open sale of negro boys, who had been imported from Africa and India. One wonders that any proprietor of a newspaper could have been found at so late a period as the close of the seventeenth century, to advertise a human being for sale, and that human being one who had been stolen; and yet the practice,—which was not uncommon in the early part of the present century,—of husbands leading their wives by the halter to Smithfield, and then putting them up to public auction, and selling them for a few shillings, was not one whit less barbarous. Yet the police authorities never interfered to prevent it. Its discontinuance is entirely to be ascribed to the power of public opinion.

I need not further pursue the subject of advertising in connexion with the newspapers of a past period. By the middle of the eighteenth century the practice became comparatively common, and with the increase of these notifications, the proprietors of newspapers became more particular as to the cha-

racter of those they received. Though steadily increasing until the beginning of the present century, the number of advertisements bore no proportion to that which we at present witness. But as I shall hereafter, when I come to speak of the present state of British newspapers generally, have occasion to recur to the subject, I will defer any further observations on it until then.

I referred in a previous part of this chapter to the extraordinary logic of one of the newspaper proprietors of the day, in announcing that with the view of encouraging the advertising department of his business he would *double* his charge for all advertisements. Of a piece with this logic was that of another newspaper proprietor, who inserted a notice to his readers in his journal, to the effect, that he thought it better to publish his *Mercury* "in quarterly volumes, desiring to continue it again as a *weekly* paper, *as soon as the glut of news is over.*" According to the ordinary rules of reasoning, the inference would be, that "the glut of news" would have just been the great inducement to continue the *Mercury* a *weekly*, instead of transforming it into a quarterly journal.

Soon after the middle of the seventeenth century numerous papers of a class kind made their appearance. There was one which took to itself a name which escapes my recollection, but which was exclusively devoted to literature. It may be said to have been the *Athenæum* of two hundred years ago. The medical profession had also their representative in the

weekly press. Though not under that name, they had their *Lancet*. Its title was the *Mercurius Medicus, or a Sovereign Salve for these Sick Times*. The clergy too could boast of their organ. It was called the *Mercurius Clericus, or News from Zion*. This journal was commenced so far back as the year 1641. Nor was the navy wanting in representation in the middle of the seventeenth century. It had its *Naval Gazette*, which was started in the year 1663 under the title of the *Mercurius Aquaticus*. Neither was the House of Commons without its organ, prepared to expound its principles and to maintain its rights and privileges, whatever they may have been, or supposed to be, two hundred years ago. The House of Commons had, at times, a host of enemies, and needed such a champion with the public. One of its avowed opponents was entitled the *Parliamentary Vulture*, which was especially fierce in its attacks on the representative branch of the Legislature. It was the existence and the conduct of this journal that led to the starting of a serial devoted to a vindication of the proceedings of the House of Commons. It adopted a strange title,—none other than that of *The Parliamentary Porter, or the Doorkeeper of the House of Commons*. What the history of this journal was, or how long it lived, are points on which I have been unable to obtain any reliable information.

Nor were the ladies without their organ in the middle of the seventeenth century. They were faithfully represented and gallantly defended when



assailed by their opponents. It will be seen, therefore, that the ladies of two hundred years ago occupied as high a social position as they do in our day. Let no one, then, accuse our sex of that day as being less gallant than in ours. Even the French residents in London published a journal in their own language; while another journal was published for their benefit in the French as well as the English language. For twenty-two years after its commencement, the *London Gazette* was published in the French language as well as in the English,—so that the English government of that day were generous to a degree to the people of France resident in London. But the most extraordinary of all the cases of class representation in the journalism of two hundred years ago which have come under my observation in searching among the newspapers of the seventeenth century, is that of smokers actually having their organ. Its title was *Mercurius Fumarius, or the Smoking Nocturnal*. Sporting seems, too, to have been an institution of the country in those days, as it is in ours, for we find that the sporting world was not without its representative in the press. The title of the sporting paper which was the organ of the sporting fraternity of the latter half of the seventeenth century, was the *Jockey Intelligencer*; but neither at this time, 1686, nor at any other period of the century, have I discovered any traces of the modern Tattersall.



## CHAPTER IV.

### NEWSPAPERS IN THE BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Contributors to the Journals—First Daily Paper—Favourite Newspaper Titles—Strange Titles—Daniel Defoe—Newspaper Stamp Duty—Dean Swift—the *Tatler* and *Spectator* Class of Journals—Sir Richard Steele and Joseph Addison—John Dunton—John Dennis.

THOUGH, in adverting to the curious advertisements which appeared in the newspapers of an early date, and transferring to my pages some specimens of them, as illustrating the manners of the times, I have made in that respect an incursion, if I may so call it, into the first half of the eighteenth century,—I have not in other respects brought the newspaper history of our ancestors further down than the close of the seventeenth century. And though I have found no materials until the beginning of the eighteenth century which would enable us to form an opinion as to the position of editors—once called printers—of the newspapers of a previous date, yet in the early part of that century we begin to have our darkness enlightened on the subject. In the year 1704 a paper called the *Observer*, of great circulation and popularity—great, I mean, in that day—was prosecuted for a libel. Whether this was the same *Observer* that

was started by Sir Roger l'Estrange in 1681, I have been unable to ascertain, not having succeeded in procuring a sight of the *Observer* of either date; but be that as it may—and it is not a matter of much importance, whichever way the fact may be—an action was brought, in 1704, against the printer and publisher, then always one and the same person, for a libel on a man of some note at that time. In the course of the cross-examination of the party who acted as editor of the newspaper in question, it transpired that all the remuneration he received for the discharge of his editorial duties was half-a-guinea per week! Newspaper editors in our day do not, as a rule, think themselves over-paid; but what would they think if some newspaper proprietor were seriously to propose to them to accept a salary of half-a-guinea per week? Yet it may be a question whether, miserably inadequate as was this remuneration for literary labour in the beginning of the eighteenth century, it was not quite as good, considering the comparative quantity and quality of the writing, as that which the late William Hazlitt received at the end of that century and the beginning of the present. Mr. Hazlitt's son, now one of the registrars in the Court of Bankruptcy, states, in the *Life of his Father*, that when he commenced his literary career, between seventy and eighty years ago, he only received five shillings per column, closely printed in small type, from one of the London papers—the name of which escapes my memory—for which he then wrote. Yet

Mr. Hazlitt is allowed, by all literary men of the present time, as he was by his contemporaries, to have been one of the best literary, dramatic, and fine art critics that ever were connected, in either of these capacities, with the newspaper press. Literary labour is certainly not, with very few exceptions, liberally paid in the present day; but when we compare, or rather contrast, the terms given by newspaper proprietors and publishers in 1871 to what were given in 1704—and in some cases at the beginning of the present century—we have reason to be gratified and grateful that matters are not worse with us.

In referring to the *Observer* as having been prosecuted in 1704, I ought not to omit repeating my remark that this *Observer* must have been at the time a popular and prosperous paper; for no fewer than three other papers under the same name, with some slight variations, were in the same year, 1704, established in opposition to it. The names of these several journals respectively were—*A New Observer*—the *Legal Observer*—and the *Observer in General*.

Among the eminent men who not only were contributors to, but editors of, one or more of the *Observers* of this period, was Bishop Burnet, author of the "History of the Reformation," and of his own Life and Times. Somehow or other this fact does not seem to have been noticed, except in one or two instances, either by contemporary writers or by those who have written at later dates on the newspaper journalism in the beginning of the eighteenth cen-

ture. Bishop Burnet most probably contributed to more than one of the newspapers contemporary with himself, but he was the acknowledged and accredited editor of *A New Observer*. Whether this was the *New Observer* started in 1701, or the *New Observer* commenced in 1704, is a point in relation to which I possess no information. Of *Observers* of some kind or other there was at this period a plentiful harvest. A few years before, several sprang into existence, all more or less partaking of the newspaper character.

It was not until the year 1702 that—numerous as had been the newspapers published, as before stated, at intervals of a month, or a fortnight, or a week, or other uncertain periods—a daily paper was started. Its title was the *Daily Courant*; but nothing is known, so far as I have been able to learn, as to the parties by whom, or the circumstances under which this first daily journal was set on foot. I have mentioned the year 1702 as the date of the appearance of the *Daily Courant*, as the first daily paper; but it is right I should state that other writers give other dates. The one most generally given is 1709; and I confess that I was at first disposed to believe that that was the correct one; but since I began writing this part of my work I have ascertained, beyond all question, that it must have been published before the year 1706; for in the “Autobiography of John Dunton”—to which I shall afterwards have to refer—it is repeatedly alluded to, under the date of 1706, as being a well-

known paper. As its starting is an era in English newspaper history, it is as well to be right in the date. Mr. Timperley, in his "History of Printing in the Eighteenth Century," gives the year 1703 as that in which the *Daily Courant* appeared as the first daily paper which had been established in England. A writer in the *Times*, three years ago, fixes the date, as I do, in 1702. Other writers have fixed the same date. Mr. Timperley was a plodding man, very anxious to be correct in his statements, but, after carefully examining the facts of the case as they have been brought before me, I have been compelled to come to the conclusion that he is wrong in his date of 1703, and that the *Daily Courant* appeared as the first daily paper in England in the year 1702. Of course if I am correct in my belief that the year 1702 is the correct date, Mr. Townsend is equally correct, when, in his "Manual of Dates," he assigns the year 1702 as the year in which the *Daily Courant* started into existence. Of this there can be no doubt,—that Chalmers and Nichols, and others who fix the date at 1709, are entirely mistaken; for other writers of that time as well as John Dunton, speak of it as being then a prosperous paper. It was, in its origin, a poor miserable thing. It was printed only on one side, and was somewhat less in size than a leaf of the *Saturday Review*. Its first number had only a few paragraphs of intelligence, and these of very little interest. It contains an address, in its opening number, in the way of an apology for the small

dimensions in which it made its appearance. "This *Courant*," says the proprietor, "will, as the title shows, be published daily; being designed to give all the material news as soon as every post arrives, and is confined to half the compass to save the public at least half the impertinence of ordinary newspapers."

The natural conclusion would be, on reading the latter sentence, that "the impertinence" lay in another direction, even at the door of the writer. The opening address further said that the *Daily Courant* professed only to give foreign news. It was added that the editor would give no comments of his own, as he assumed that other people had sense enough to make reflections for themselves. The editorship of the *Daily Courant*, with its one folio page, the absence of original comments, and the exclusion of everything but condensed foreign news, must have been a veritable sinecure. Editors of "daily" papers in the present day do not get off so easily. It is worthy of mention, as this *Daily Courant* was the earliest daily paper in England, that its publishing office was at first, and for many years, close to the present publishing office of the *Times*. After little more than two months the paper came into the hands of Mr. Joseph Buckley, an enterprising printer and bookseller, and he at once enlarged it to two pages, and added very greatly to the amount and variety of its intelligence.

But there is another fact in connexion with the *Daily Courant*, as the first alleged daily paper, to which I have not yet referred, but to which it is well briefly



to advert, because it possesses a certain amount of historic interest. I allude to the question whether the assumption, almost universally made, that the *Daily Courant* of 1702 was in reality the first daily paper published in this country, is correct. Until two years and a half ago my researches into the early history of the newspaper press had not made me aware that any claim had ever been made for the existence of a daily paper at an earlier date than that at which the *Daily Courant* was commenced; but in the month of October, 1868, I found a letter in the *Times*, asserting that a daily paper had been started in the time of Charles II., forty-two years previous to the appearance of the first number of the *Daily Courant* on the 11th of March, 1702. In this letter, in the *Times* of October, 1868, there occurs this passage:—

It is commonly supposed that the first daily newspaper in England was the *Daily Courant*, the introductory number of which appeared on Wednesday, the 11th of March, 1702, three days after the accession of Queen Anne. In point of fact, however, a daily newspaper had been started forty-two years previously, while Charles II. was still at Breda, and while Monk was still wavering between King and Commonwealth. In the collection of news-sheets made by Dr. Burney, and preserved in the British Museum, may be seen three numbers of *A Perfect Diurnal*, dated the 8th, 9th, and 10th March, 1660. This publication consisted of four leaves of small quarto, was printed by John Redmayne in Lovel's Court, Paternoster Row, and consisted exclusively of the orders of Parliament, of the bills read and petitions presented, resembling in its contents the ordinary diurnals of the Civil Wars.



The letter from which this extract is made, and which is dated "Temple, October 10th," was answered three days afterwards, that is, on the 13th of October. I quote the principal points in this answer:—

Your Correspondent, after alluding to the *Daily Courant* of 1702, hitherto supposed to be the first daily newspaper, not only of England, but of the world, says that, "in point of fact, a daily newspaper had been started forty-two years previously, while Charles II. was still at Breda, and while Monk was still wavering between King and Commonwealth." But is he borne out in this assertion by the publication he refers to? This is, "A Perfect Diurnal of the Daily proceedings in Parliament, published according to order," of three numbers of which, Nos. 8, 9, and 10, bearing date the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of March, 1660, copies are preserved in the Burney collection at the British Museum. The contents of this publication are merely the orders and resolutions of the House of Commons for the days specified. A publication of this sort would be contingent on the meetings of the House, would only be daily as long as they continued to be daily, and would be interrupted by an adjournment and cease at the close of a session. The "Votes" of the House are published in the same way now for some days in succession, but can these be regarded as a daily newspaper?

The *Daily Courant* of 1702 was quite a different kind of publication. Part of an advertisement printed in the first number runs as follows: "This *Courant* (as the Title shews) will be Publish'd Daily; being design'd to give all the Material News as soon as every Post arrives; and is confin'd to half the Compass to save the Publick at least half the Impertinences of Ordinary Newspapers."

In fact, the *Courant* consisted of one leaf only, like the *London Gazette* of the time, and of this leaf only one page contained printed matter, the other presenting a "universal blank," on the principle, probably, of the news-letters, to

allow customers to add their own gossip as "London Correspondents" to friends in the country. The plan did not answer, and the first daily newspaper in the world seemed destined to be only a nine days' wonder. The set in the Burney collection, which commences on Wednesday, March 11th, 1702, goes no further than No. 9, for March 20th. But it soon revived under a different publisher. A new set appears by the numbering—for No. 1 of this is not found in the Burney collection—to have commenced on the 20th of March, 1702, a month after the cessation of the great original. The first series was "Sold by E. Mallett, next door to the King's Arms Tavern, at Fleet-bridge"—the tavern now in course of destruction for the Holborn improvements; the second was "Printed and Sold by Sam. Buckley, at the Dolphin, in Little Britain," the publisher who afterwards issued the *Tatler* and *Spectator*. Buckley had found out the secret of success; the second page of every leaf, which in Mallett's series was left blank, was in Buckley's covered with advertisements.

I entirely agree with the views of the latter correspondent of the *Times*. Apart from all other considerations, I hold that the fact that none of the contemporaries of the *Daily Courant* should, when it started, have questioned its claims to being the first daily newspaper, is at least presumptive evidence that it was so.

But in saying that the *Daily Courant* was the first daily paper, a word of explanation is necessary. As a daily paper which continued for some years, the fact is so. In that sense, it is true that the *Daily Courant* was the first daily newspaper that had any lengthened existence; but a daily journal was started seven years before it made its appearance. The paper to which I

refer was called the *Postboy*. It was started on Wednesday, June 19th, 1695, as a daily paper, having previously existed for some years as a twice a week journal.

The "Metropolitan Encyclopædia," usually well informed, names this very year as one in which there were no daily papers. The *Postboy's* life, as a daily newspaper, was, it is true, but brief. It only lived a few days, having been started on Wednesday and ceased to exist on the following Saturday. Still, it was a daily paper seven years before the *Daily Courant*. It only consisted of one leaf, about the size of the *Saturday Review*, and the second page of this single leaf was wholly blank, while the whole of the matter in the one printed page might have been easily absorbed by one column of any of the closely-printed pages of our present morning papers. It is quite right, therefore, though not literally true, that the *Daily Courant* should be spoken of as the first daily paper which was published in England.

It was not long before the example thus set by the projectors of the *Daily Courant* was followed by several other parties. Chalmers, in his "Life of Ruddiman," mentions that in the course of a few years there were several daily journals, in addition to the *Courant*. The *Daily Post* and the *Daily Journal* were the titles of two of the number. Daily papers do not, however, seem to have been very successful; for I find, from the same reliable authority, that in 1724 there were only two daily journals in existence. Not one of

them is in existence now ; but in the following year an amalgamation took place between the papers respectively entitled the *St. James's Post* and the *St. James's Evening Post*, under the title of the *St. James's Chronicle*. The latter journal some years ago was bought by the proprietors of the *Press*, and absorbed by the latter journal,—once the organ of Mr. Disraeli, if not actually his property.

Strange newspaper titles still continued to be adopted at brief intervals. In the first year of the century, on the 1st of November, a weekly newspaper was commenced under the title of the *Morning Mercury, or a Farce of Fools*. One cannot see what possible bearing such a title as this could have on the general news of the day. Yet the title was not more strange than one given to a newspaper started thirty years before this time. The latter title was *Jesuita Vapulans ; or a Whip for the Fool's Back, and a Gad for his Foul Mouth*. But at the two periods referred to, in newspaper history, everything was unlike the views which we entertain in the present day. In 1708 a paper was set on foot under the singular title of *The British Apollo, or Curious Amusements for the Ingenious ; to which are added the Most Material Occurrences, Foreign and Domestic. Performed by a Society of Gentlemen*. The first number was issued on the 15th of February, and it was published twice a week, and continued for three years. It is difficult to understand from its title what its precise character was. The only reference known to have been made to it by

any contemporary writer is in a letter of Gay, the author of the "Fables" and the "Beggar's Opera," but whose memory is perhaps still more cherished by his beautiful letter relative to the two lovers who were killed by lightning, than even by his "Fables." What Gay says of the character of the newspaper in question is simply, that "it still recommends itself by deciding wagers at cards." How strange, that if this was the principal feature of the *British Apollo*, it should have lasted for three years as a twice-a-week paper!

In the year 1704, an incident occurred in the newspaper world which possesses no inconsiderable historical interest. In that year Daniel Defoe, who, as the author of "Robinson Crusoe," was the father of our novel literature, started a weekly newspaper under the title of the *Review of the Affairs of State*. Previous to this, Defoe, who, I ought to mention, had been intended for the Christian ministry in connexion with the Presbyterian denomination, though he afterwards entered into various trades, in all of which he was unsuccessful, had written a poetical satire entitled "The True-born Englishman." Though Defoe was but a poor poet—if, indeed, he was entitled to be considered a poet at all—this satire was, in a commercial point of view, a great success. The object of the poetic effusion, or rather effusion in rhyme, was to hold up foreigners to ridicule, and to eulogize King William as the best of men and the very model of a monarch. The opening lines, as a writer in Chambers'

“Cyclopædia of English Literature” quotes them, were the following :—

Wherever God erects a house of prayer,  
The devil always builds a chapel there ;  
And, 'twill be found upon examination,  
The latter has the largest congregation.

As anything and everything relating to so remarkable a man as Defoe must be interesting, not only to those who take a pleasure in perusing the pages of newspaper history, but to all who wish to become acquainted with the literature of the latter part of the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth centuries, they will, I am sure, read with interest a reference, in a subsequent page—for which I am indebted to the work of Timperley, to which I have before alluded—relative to Defoe’s sufferings in the pillory, for an offence of which he was convicted.

It was while in prison for a satirical pamphlet entitled “The Shortest Way with the Dissenters,” pronounced by the House of Commons a scandalous and seditious pamphlet, that the author of “Robinson Crusoe” commenced the newspaper I have just mentioned. This publication continued weekly for two years, at the end of which he changed the title, and his principal subject to *A Review of the State of the English Nation*. This new political journal was, like the former, published, in the first instance, once a week ; but after a time it appeared three times a week, —on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. This journal of Defoe’s met for some time with considerable success,



and continued to be published until the year 1713, when it ceased to exist, in consequence, there can be no doubt, of the imposition of a tax on newspapers, passed the previous year, and to which I shall presently have to advert. The *Review of the State of the English Nation*, though chiefly dealing with great national questions, had more of the appearance of the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, and other similar periodicals which were brought out soon after the publication of Defoe's journal, than of contemporary newspapers.

One feature in this paper was the column which was headed "Advice for the Scandalous Club." The objects which Defoe had in view in this department of his paper, and the manner in which he proposed to accomplish them, are thus described by himself. "As," he says, "to my brethren of the worshipful company of newsprinters, they shall meet with no ill treatment. But if they tell a lie that a man may feel with his foot, and not only proclaim their folly but their knavery; if they banter religion, sport with things sacred, or dip their pens in blasphemy, our Scandalous Club is a new corporation erected on purpose to make inquisition on such matters, and will treat them but scurvily, as they deserve."

Defoe's *Review* was printed on a half sheet, or four quarto pages, and all the original or disquisitionary matter was written by Defoe himself. Including pamphlets, he wrote and published no fewer than 210 works; and yet, though some of them had a great sale, he died, in 1731, not only poor but insolvent.



Early in the eighteenth century a number of newspapers started into existence, but it is not necessary to mention the titles of them all, more especially as most of them had only a short-lived existence, and but two or three obtained either reputation or a large circulation. The beginning of the century was characterized by an event which created no small sensation in the newspaper world. A bill was in 1701 brought into Parliament for the purpose of imposing a tax of one penny on every publication periodically issuing from the press, and consisting of a whole sheet, and of a halfpenny for every publication consisting of a half sheet. The proprietors of newspapers had previously suffered so much from the occasional resorts made by the governments of the day to the expedient of prohibiting the publication of any newspaper not duly licensed, that they were thrown into the greatest consternation by the announcement of this intended imposition of a tax on newspapers. While the rigid enforcement of the licensing laws often subjected them to severe penalties in the form of fine, imprisonment, and in several instances, to the pillory and the flagellation of their persons, most of them clearly foresaw that this measure, if enacted, would, because of the consequent advance which they would have to make in the price of their journals, entail on themselves utter ruin. It was felt by them that it would be impossible to continue the publication of their papers. Acting, there can be no doubt, chiefly from motives of self-interest, but proceeding on

alleged grounds of anxiety for the benefit of the poorer portion of the public, the newspaper proprietors of this second year of the eighteenth century, made representations to Parliament against the enactment of the contemplated measure. They stated that "the said newspapers have been always sold for one half-penny to the poorer sort of people, who are purchasers of it by reason of its cheapness, to divert themselves, and also to allure herewith their young children, and entice them to reading; and should a duty of three-halfpence be laid upon these newspapers, which, by reason of the coarseness of the paper, the generality of gentlemen are above conversing with, it would utterly extinguish and suppress the same." Whether it was owing or not to the effect of these representations I am unable to say, but the intended measure was abandoned, though, as will be seen hereafter, a tax on all newspapers was imposed eleven years afterwards.

There is a statement in Timperley's "History of Printing in the Eighteenth Century," to the effect that every master-printer paid at this time "nine shillings per week duty to His Majesty;" but the author does not explain for what reason or on what grounds this tax was imposed. The same historian of printing in the eighteenth century also states that for every advertisement inserted in any newspaper published in this year (1701), the proprietor had to pay to the state, in the name of the king, a duty of one shilling. This is the first intimation I

meet with, in my researches into the early history of the newspaper press, of advertisements being taxed.

The class of journals to which I have before referred, though not coming under the category of newspapers, strictly so called, possessed, in conjunction with their beautiful essay-writing, certain newspaper features, which entitle them to a passing notice. And in addition to the fact that they contained advertisements, like the ordinary newspapers, they devoted more or less of their space, according to circumstances, to the publication of intelligence, and made editorial comments on the leading events of the day. The names of their principal writers were, for the most part, more or less connected with the newspaper press, properly so considered. The leading journals of the class to which I allude, were the *Tatler*, which was the first of the kind, having been commenced in 1709, by Sir Richard Steele, assisted by Addison. In speaking of the *Tatler*, I ought to mention that in the same year, 1709, another semi-newspaper made its appearance, under the title of the *Female Tatler*. It professed to be edited "by Mrs. Crackenthorpe, a Lady who knows Everything." I have not obtained a sight of this publication, which, after a year's existence, seems to have undergone some editorial change; for after that the name of Mrs. Crackenthorpe was erased from the titlepage, and the words substituted, "By a Society of Ladies." Of its subsequent history I have been unable to learn anything. The *Spectator*, started in 1711—the chief writer

being Addison; the *Guardian*, and the *Englishman*, in 1713, and the *Freeholder* in 1715. The best known writers in these last publications were Steele and Addison; but there were other authors, of great eminence at that time, and whose popularity is hardly less in the present day, who wrote largely in the newspaper press in the years I have mentioned. A paper existed at this time, which had considerable circulation and influence, called the *Examiner*. It was the recognised organ of the High Tory party. Lord Bolingbroke, Dean Swift, Matthew Prior, and Bishop Atterbury were four of the chief writers in its pages. The writing in this journal was so powerful and pungent in support of the Tory government of the day, that Addison, as the leading writer in favour of the Whig party, determined on resolutely entering the arena with the *Examiner*. With that view he engaged the writers in the *Whig Examiner*, which had been started in avowed opposition to the High Tory *Examiner*. The *Whig Examiner* only, however, lived till its fifth number, when the writings of its ablest contributors—among whom was Steele—were transferred to a paper called the *Medley*, advocating the same political views. Dean Swift alludes to this latter newspaper in the following exceedingly coarse and violent language: "Those devils of Grub Street, rogues that write the *Flying Post* and *Medley* in one paper, will not be quiet. They are always mauling the Lord Treasurer, Lord Bolingbroke, and me. We have the dog,"—meaning the editor, for both papers

were conducted by the same editor,—“under prosecution, but Bolingbroke is not active enough; but I hope to scourge him. He is a Scotch rogue, one Redpath.” I do not find that Addison joined the staff of writers on the *Medley*, nor do I meet with anything to show that he continued the party conflict any longer, though it lasted with great rancour on both sides for a considerable time. As Mr. Andrews, in his work on British Journalism, justly remarks, “It was a fight better adapted for the fierce Dean of St. Patrick’s than for the gentle Addison.” It is a curious fact, that the *Examiner* and *Whig Examiner* both ceased to exist within a week of each other. Like the Kilkenny cats, they destroyed each other. The *Whig Examiner* survived the *Examiner*, and had the gratification of recording its rival’s death and funeral in its own last number.

The year 1712 was one of great importance in the newspaper world of that day. In that year a tax of one halfpenny per sheet was imposed on every half sheet, and of one penny on every newspaper of a sheet and a half. The consternation caused by the imposition of this stamp duty among newspaper proprietors was, as might naturally be expected, very great. It was felt by many of their number that the legislative sanction of that measure would be the pronouncement of a sentence sealing their doom. In the previous history of the newspaper press the interests of the proprietors had been seriously affected by being subjected to the necessity of having their journals licensed; but

that was a very different thing from the enactment of a law which would raise their untaxed journals, sold at a penny, to three-halfpence. The apprehensions of newspaper proprietors relative to the effects of the imposition of a halfpenny tax on each publication, were fully realized. The havoc committed among the existing newspapers was great. Many of their number at once ceased to exist, and others continued to live only a feeble and fitful life, to be followed, in a longer or shorter period, by their death. Dean Swift seems to have been among the first to have had private information as to the intended measure; and the general belief was, that the government had let him, at an early period, into the secret of their resolution to tax the newspapers, because, for some reasons or other, which were by no means clear, he wished to see such a measure receive the sanction of the legislature. Be this as it may, one thing is certain,—that he was among the first to be in possession of the government secret respecting the intended imposition of a tax on the newspapers. Though the measure did not pass until the 10th of June, 1712, he writes, in his *Journal to Stella*, under date January, 1710, in the following terms: “‘They are here,’ meaning in London, ‘intending to tax all little penny papers a halfpenny every half sheet, which will utterly ruin Grub Street;’ and I am endeavouring to prevent it.” Notwithstanding Swift’s assertion to *Stella*, that he endeavoured to prevent the imposition of the tax, it was the general belief, as I have already intimated,



that he was secretly in favour of it. I regard this as a fair inference, apart from all other presumptive evidence on the subject, from the fact that when the Act came into operation, which it did on the first day of August in the same year, 1712, Swift again wrote on the subject to Stella, in the following terms: "All Grub Street is dead and gone. No more ghosts or murders now, for love or money,"—just as a few days before the law came into operation he wrote to Stella, "Grub Street has not ten days to live." Language like this is evidently that of an ill-natured exultation, instead of that of a man who regretted the imposition of the tax on newspapers and sought to prevent the passing of the measure. The colour of this little stamp, which caused so great a sensation among newspaper proprietors, was red, and the design consisted of the rose and thistle, united at the stalk, and inclosing the shamrock,—the three national emblems being surmounted by the imperial crown.

In reference to the probable, or rather inevitable, operation of this tax on newspapers, or pamphlets, Addison wrote, in the *Spectator*, on the day it became law, in the following terms: "This is the day on which many eminent authors will probably publish their last works. I am afraid that few of our weekly historians, who are men that, above all others, delight in war, will be able to subsist under the weight of a stamp duty in approaching peace. In short, the necessity of carrying a stamp and the impracticability of notifying a bloody battle will, I am afraid, both



concur to the sinking of those thin folios which have every other day related to us the history at length of Europe for several years last past. A facetious friend of mine," adds Addison, "who loves a pun, calls this present mortality among authors 'the fall of the leaf.' "

Instead, however, of these stamp duties continuing in operation for thirty-two years—the time appointed by Parliament—they soon ceased to be enforced. I have not been able to ascertain either the exact time at which they were allowed to fall into disuse, or the cause.

Among the papers of note which were extinguished by the operation of the Stamp Act was the *Observer*, to which I have before referred. It was started by John Tutchin, a bookseller, whose patriotism was so ardent, and whose personal sacrifices for his principles were so great and manifold, that a few lines to his memory are due to him. He died in 1707. The principal incident in his eventful life was the circumstance of his being tried by Judge Jeffreys for a vindication in his paper, the *Observer*, of the rebellion of the Duke of Monmouth, in which rebellion he took an active personal part. The sentence passed upon him by that judge—the most unjust and severe, perhaps, that ever sat on the English bench—was that he should be whipped through several towns in the West of England. The way in which this sentence was carried out was so rigorous, that he preferred hanging to it. He petitioned Jeffreys to send him to the gallows at once. He was highly esteemed for the courage and

earnestness with which he asserted and defended his principles as a patriot and a Liberal. In relation to the brave manner in which he bore the series of frightful flagellations to which he was subjected in the execution of Judge Jeffreys' sentence, just as Daniel Defoe bore his punishment in the pillory—Pope, in his "Dunciad," says :

Earless on high stood unabashed Defoe,  
And Tutchin flagrant from the scourge below.

Those papers of the *Spectator* class which inserted advertisements, though not possessing the usual features of a newspaper, were subjected to the tax of 1712. And as the *Spectator* opened its pages to advertisements, it also came within the provisions of the Act. Unwilling to succumb to the oppressive tax Addison resorted to the expedient of doubling the price of the *Spectator*. By this means, and the *Spectator* being then at the height of its popularity, he was able to carry it on for some time after this ; but the circulation, at the doubled price of the periodical, gradually decreased, until the *Spectator* ceased to be commercially successful, and it was consequently discontinued. Mr. Wingrove Cook, in his "Life of Lord Bolingbroke," states that the reason assigned by Queen Anne, in one of her messages to Parliament, for imposing this tax on newspapers, was "that by seditious papers and factious rumours designing men had been able to sink credit, and that the innocent had suffered." Her Majesty therefore

called on her Parliament "to find and apply a remedy equal to the mischief." A law imposing the tax in question was the response to the royal appeal to the legislature of 1712, which her ministers put into her Majesty's mouth.

In the class of papers to which I have here adverted, Sir Richard Steele was the most voluminous writer. Of the 271 papers in the *Tatler* he wrote no fewer than 188, while Addison contributed 42. It is generally believed that Addison wrote a very large majority of the essays in the *Spectator*, but his contributions did not constitute a majority at all, of the papers which appeared in that periodical,—then, as it is still, one of great popularity. Of the 638 essays or criticisms which constituted the contents of the *Spectator*, Addison furnished 274 and Steele 240; the remaining 124 being contributed by other hands. After the *Tatler* and other papers, of which Steele had either been editor or to which he had largely contributed, had been discontinued, he started several new publications possessing essentially the same features, such as the *Lover*, the *Leader*, the *Plebeian*, &c., but none of them had more than an ephemeral existence. He was a remarkably active man in the newspaper, or perhaps I should rather say, the literary world, and between his journalistic troubles and pecuniary difficulties, his name was perpetually before the public of his day. His parliamentary career too, though but brief, was one of unhappiness, in consequence of his journalistic actions. In the year 1714 he was charged

before the House of Commons with having printed and published in two of his periodicals, the *Englishman* and the *Crisis*, articles “calculated to promote sedition,”—with “aspersing the character of Her Majesty, and assailing the conduct of the administration.” He made an able speech in vindication of his conduct, but the House came to a resolution to expel him. The resolution was framed in these words: “Resolved, that Richard Steele”—he was not knighted at this time—“for his offence in writing and publishing the said scandalous and seditious libel, be expelled this House.”

Having repeatedly referred to Sir Richard Steele in my previous pages, I shall, I am sure, be permitted to make an allusion to him in another than a literary capacity. It will scarcely be credited that a man who like Sir Richard was a few years before the publication of his *Tatler* in the thickest of party conflict, and fighting resolutely and incessantly in the literary arena as well, was as violently in love, if we may credit his own protestations, as ever a human being was. He was at the time to which I refer a widower, and the object of his intense affection was a widow lady named Mrs. Mary Scurlocke. It would appear that in the first instance, and for some time, his addresses were not only rejected, but he himself treated with something which looked very much like studied indignity. His first letter to the lady—at least it is the first of which we have any record—begins in this way:—“Madam, I came to your house this

night to wait on you, but you have commanded me to expect the happiness of seeing you at another time of more leisure." It would have been supposed that this was not calculated to fan the flame of his affection. Yet it seems to have had that effect. "I am now," continues Sir Richard, "under your own roof while I write, and that imaginary satisfaction of being so near you, though not in your presence, has something that touches me with so tender ideas that it is impossible for me to describe their force. You are so good as to let me know I shall have the pleasure of seeing you when I next come here. I will live on that expectation, and meditate on your perfections till that happy hour. The vainest woman upon earth never saw in her glass half the attractions which I now see in you. Your air, your shape, your every glance, motion, and gesture, have such peculiar graces that you possess my whole soul, and I have no life but in the hopes of your approbation. I know not what to say, but that I love you with the sincerest passion that ever entered the heart of man." But good as is this specimen of the loves of an Irishman, there is something still better in store. The second letter to his lady-love is even yet more tender and vehement in its terms. "Madam," he says, "with what language shall I address my lovely fair to acquaint her with the sentiments she delights to torture? I have not a minute's quiet out of your sight, and when I am with you, you use me with so much distance, that I am still in a state of

absence, heightened with a view of the charms which I am denied to approach. In a word, you must give me either a fan, a mask, or a glove you have wore, or I cannot live; otherwise you must expect I'll kiss your hand, or when I next sit by you, steal your handkerchief. You yourself are too great a bounty to be received at once; therefore I must be prepared by degrees lest the mighty gift distract me with joy. Dear Mrs. Scurlocke, I am tired with calling you by that name; therefore say the day in which you will take that of, Madam, your most obedient, most devoted servant, R. Steele." In some other of his letters Sir Richard Steele even surpassed these protestations of his passion for his widow-love. He succeeded in the end, notwithstanding all the repulses he met with at first; and she whom he, in some of his most Irish-like love-letters, was afraid to call by any other name than "Madam," in time became Lady Steele. I am conscious of a digression here, but I am sure the reader will not regret it, because I have shown how possible it is, in the genuine Irish character, to be at one and the same moment over head and ears in love, and yet in the very height of the turmoil of literary and political conflict.

I ought not to close my reference to the *Spectator* class of publications without making a remark, which will probably occur to the minds of many of my readers. Exactly a century and a half has elapsed since the *Spectator* was six months old, and actively engaged in exposing and censuring the foibles and



follies of that day ; and yet some of the absurdities,—and worse than absurdities,—in manners and dress which Addison then ridiculed, though in the polished terms in which his refined mind led him habitually to write,—are as prevalent in 1871 as they were in 1711. Some people imagine that the liberal use, on the part of ladies, of cosmetics and other expedients for improving the complexion, are of comparatively modern invention. Those who read the *Spectator* will find from the frequent reference in its pages to these practices, that among the higher classes they were then scarcely less common than now. Nor, indeed, would it be fair to the ladies of Queen Anne's time to insinuate that all the expedients to which they resorted for beautifying their persons originated with themselves. The fact is duly recorded in Roman history, that among the discoveries made on excavating the ruins of Pompeii were conclusive proofs, from an inspection of the toilet cases of the ladies of that city, that they were practically conversant with the use of cosmetics and other devices for giving greater effect to those charms with which nature had endowed them. Lately, no lady of fashion, hardly, indeed, a scullery-maid, would have ventured out of the house without her hoop of ample circumference ; and hoops were in universal use, at least among females of position, in the days of Addison. Just now, not only ladies moving in the better circles of society, but, indeed, down to the very humblest in position, of the sex, wear hideous head-dresses, called chignons ; yet these



are not of modern origin. In the reign of Queen Anne they were more or less common; while it may be doubted whether they were not even more extravagant in their dimensions, and outrageous in their appearance, than in our day. At least, Addison gives countenance to this idea; for he says, "that there were as many orders of building"—meaning in the head-gear of the sex—"as in those which have been made of marble." Addison is severe on the "naked shoulders" of the ladies of his time. The lowness of the bodies worn by the ladies would afford equal scope for the pen of the satirist of 1871. Indeed, the *Spectator*, in lashing many of his contemporary ladies for the unseemliness of their toilets, compared the latter to the dress of females professedly gay. Were some modern Addison to live in our day, would he not find ample materials for his censure in the costume of many ladies moving in the upper classes of society?

At this period, and some time before and after, there was a person connected with the press who, although not, so far as I am aware, either as proprietor or editor, was so well known as to merit a brief notice. I allude to John Dennis. He acquired considerable reputation as a poet and dramatist, but was chiefly known as a journalistic critic. He was severe, often virulent, in nearly all that he wrote in that capacity; and the natural consequence was, that he was assailed, vituperated, and lampooned by many of his contemporaries. In 1712 he attacked Addison's tragedy of

“Cato” in so rancorous a manner that it called forth a pamphlet in which he was held up to crushing ridicule as if he had been a maniac, under the odd title of “The Narrative of Dr. John Norris, concerning the Strange and Deplorable Frenzy of Mr. John Dennis.” But probably nothing could be more severe than the epigram written on him by Savage, and first published in the preface to Dr. Johnson’s “Lives of the English Poets:”

Should Dennis publish you had stabbed your brother,  
Lampoon'd your monarch, or debauched your mother,  
Say what revenge on Dennis can be had?  
Too dull for laughter—for reply too mad;  
On one so poor you cannot take the law;  
On one so old your sword you scorn to draw.  
Uncag'd then let the harmless monster rage,  
Secure in dulness, madness, want, and age.

This singularly irascible man, who seemed to have a personal dislike to every one he knew, and whose temper must have made him one of the most unhappy of human beings, was, according to “Chambers’ Encyclopædia,” one of the best abused men in English literature. Swift lampooned him in his “Horace;” Pope assailed him in the “Essay on Criticism,” and “finally damned him to everlasting fame.”

I believe it is the universal impression of those who are not conversant with the newspaper literature of the early part of the eighteenth century, that no political papers were published until within the last few years at so low a rate as a halfpenny. This is a mistake. Probably the majority of the newspapers

published in the beginning of the century were sold for a halfpenny; but what will much more surprise the readers of this work is the fact, that at least one well-known journal of that day was only charged a farthing. Its title indicated what its price was; or, in other words, its price was part of its title. It was published under the name of the *Farthing Post*. I am not cognizant of the fact, if such it be, that any newspaper has been published, even in these days of cheap newspapers, at so small a price as a farthing. It is true that, some years ago, a kind of literary journal was brought out at that low price, but it only lived for a few months. The wholesale venders of cheap periodicals set their faces against it as a periodical which caused them great inconvenience in dealing with their retail customers. Since then no attempt of the kind has been repeated, so far as my knowledge extends, as none had been made at any previous period for more than a hundred years. Still, as the rage for cheap publications continues to grow greater and greater, it would not surprise me much were a renewed effort to be made before long to bring out some farthing newspaper, under some of the varied titles which are now so very common in the newspaper world. Should the experiment be tried, there will be fears for the shipwreck of the enterprise on the same rock,—the hostility of newsvenders,—the rock on which the farthing venture to which I have alluded came to speedy ruin; for it is improbable in the highest degree that the venders of cheap publica-

tions will ever support any publication so very cheap as a farthing; and without their patronage ruin is inevitable.

In the year 1714 there appeared, under the odd title of *Dunton's Ghost*, a journal which was a kind of newspaper, but which mingled with its intelligence a great deal of the eccentric effusions, in prose and verse, of its erratic proprietor. His name was John Dunton. I have learnt nothing of the fortunes of this paper; but about the year 1716 Dunton embarked, in conjunction with Daniel Defoe,—though, some years before, he had fiercely assailed the author of “*Robinson Crusoe*,”—in the publication of another newspaper, under the title of the *Hanover Spy*. It was because of the notice which was taken of him by the public, partly owing to his books, and partly owing to his newspaper connexions, that Pope gave him a place in his “*Dunciad*.” He lived a life of continuous warfare of the fiercest kind with other journalists and authors of his day. The terms in which he assailed some of them by name were of the coarsest kind. A Mr. Phillips, a man of some reputation at that time as the translator of a work, “*The Present State of Europe*,” had, it appears, started a newspaper under the title of the *Whipster*, which Dunton maintained was a virtual piracy of a journal of his called the *Whipping Post*. “And, under that impression,” he writes, “I come next to the *Whipster*, who stole my title of the *Whipping Post*. This sot of an author is a compound of all that is vile, dull, and

absurd in the *Moderator* and *Wandering Spy*”—two of the newspapers of the day—“with this addition, that Phillips is the greater sot. His head is like an Irish bog, a spongy quagmire; his brains are in a perpetual souse-tub. This profound soaker is one of the common scorns of all civil people, as carrying about him all the signs and tokens of a shameless sot. His eyes are ready to tumble out of his head, and, as the beast hath on him the drunkards’ mark, so he hath their rewards,—shame and poverty.”

Even women who incurred Dunton’s displeasure were treated by him with the same virulence and vituperation. A Mrs. Matthews had become the proprietor of a paper called the *Wandering Spy*, which often attacked him, and, holding her, as publisher, responsible, he assailed her with the utmost rancour and in the most abusive terms. “Matthews,” he says, among other things, “rails at other women. Her purity consists much in her linen. She is a female slanderer. Her very courtesies are intolerable, they are done with such design upon you; and she is the only person you may hate after a good turn, and not be ungrateful. I may justly reckon it among my calamities that ever I listened to her double tongue, or suffered myself to be treated by her. This woman and these earless fellows—if they had their due—are such a rabble of noisy, empty, scandalous authors, that, if they should provoke me a second time, as they are beneath my pen and sword, I will only stoop so

low as to hire some able porter to kick them downstairs."

This very eccentric man, but one who in his day played a prominent part in the literary, political, and newspaper theatres of life, retained his eccentricity till the last. One of his latest productions—though his biographer, Mr. J. B. Nichols, is not certain that it was ever published, never having seen a copy of it in print,—was entitled, "A Living Man following his own Corpse to the Grave; or, Dunton represented as Dead and Buried, in an Essay on his own Funeral. To which is added, for the Oddness and Singularity of it, a Copy of his Last Will and Testament; his Living Elegy wrote with his own Hand; and the Epitaph designed for his Tombstone in the New Burying-place."

Dunton was intended and educated by his father, himself a clergyman, for the Church; but his eccentricities unfitted him for the clerical profession, and his father consequently apprenticed him to an eminent publisher of the day, and on the termination of his apprenticeship he himself started as publisher and bookseller. His eccentricity oftentimes verged on lunacy. He was a voluminous author, having written thirty-five productions, which are known to have proceeded from his pen, besides others which were unknown; and though often very rhapsodical, he was frequently remarkable for the raciness and felicity of his descriptions of men and things. The subjects and the titles of several of his books are very strange. One



of his titles is, "The Lost Rib Restored; or, An Essay attempting to prove that the Relation between Man and Wife is not Dissolved by Death, but Abides for Ever; and that those Virgins who Die Unmarried are yet Related to Husbands, and will be United to them in the Other World." Another title to one of Dunton's works is no less odd: "The Funeral of Mankind: a Paradox, proving we are all Dead and Buried." Equally odd is the title, "The She-Club; or, Sixty Maids at Confession." There was one of Dunton's titles which must have caused surprise and given great offence at the court of Queen Anne. It was, "A Cat may Look at a Queen; or, a Satire upon Her present Majesty." The expression "A Cat may look at a Queen"—(or a King, if a male Sovereign be on the throne),—has become so common a saying that every one is acquainted with it. Whether the title I have just quoted as one of Dunton's many works, was the origin of the phrase, or whether he merely adopted what was a kind of proverb in his day, is a point on which I can give no opinion. The most interesting of all this eccentric writer's works is his own autobiography, of which a new edition in 1818 was published by the late Mr. Nichols. The title of this curious work is, "The Life and Errors of John Dunton, late Citizen of London. Written by Himself in Solitude; with the Idea of a New Life; wherein is Shown how He would Think, Speak, and Act, might He Live over his Days again; intermixed with the New Discoveries the Author has made in his Travels Abroad,



and in his Private Conversation at Home ; together with the Lives and Characters of a Thousand Persons now Living in London, &c., Digested into Seven Stages, with their respective Ideas.”

For three years after the passing of the Stamp Duty Act no new journal which excited any special interest or acquired position was brought out, though some were started which attracted no attention. But in 1715 a newspaper made its appearance under the title of the *London Post*, which acquired some reputation, and deserves a special reference to it on two accounts. The first is, that its projector and proprietor, Mr. Harris, had in Charles the Second's time been put in the pillory for a publication in which he boldly advocated his opinions, as a Liberal, in defiance of the government of the day. What added to the interest of the fact of the proprietor of the *London Post* being thus placed in the pillory, was the other fact that his wife, with true womanly devotion and self-sacrifice, gallantly took her place on the pillory beside him, with the view of protecting him from the violence of the mob. The other circumstance which clothed the *London Post* with a special interest after it had been some time in existence, was the fact that Daniel Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" first appeared in that journal. That first of British novels—a novel unsurpassed in its engrossing interest till the present day—was commenced by Defoe in the 125th number of the *London Post*, and closed in the 289th number. It is worthy of note, that "Robinson Crusoe," like many of our

best works, both in prose and poetry, had a narrow escape of never being published at all. Defoe had hawked it about among all the then publishers, and not one would, in the first instance, undertake the risk of publication. At last, by some means or other with which we are unacquainted, a Mr. William Taylor, of whom we know nothing beyond the simple fact that he was a bookseller in Paternoster Row, undertook its publication. The work rose so rapidly in public estimation that the publisher in a very short time made 1000*l.* profit by its sale, and so continuous was its popularity, that in forty years it went through forty editions.

It will no doubt give great satisfaction to most readers to know something of the personal appearance of a man whose "Robinson Crusoe" has been read and admired by every one capable of reading; and probably no more literal description of his personal appearance could be given than that which was issued by the government of the day in a sort of *Hue and Cry Gazette*, when he was sentenced to be fined, imprisoned, and placed three times in the pillory, for the publication of his pamphlet entitled "The Shortest Way with the Dissenters." The following was dated "St. James's, January 10, 1704: Whereas Daniel Defoe, alias De Foe, is charged with writing a scandalous and seditious pamphlet, entitled 'The Shortest Way with the Dissenters;' he is a middle-sized spare man, about forty-six years old, of a brown complexion, and dark brown coloured hair, but wears

a wig ; a hooked nose, a straight chin, gray eyes, and a large mole near his mouth." A reward of 50*l.* was offered for his apprehension. He was discovered in his hidingplace, and having suffered the execution of that part of his sentence which condemned him to stand three times in the pillory, he wrote the following "Ode to the Pillory :"

Hail Hieroglyphic State Machine,  
 Condemned to punish Fancy in !  
 Men that are men can in thee feel no pain,  
 And all thy insignificance disdain.  
 Contempt, that false new word for shame,  
 Is, without crime, an empty name—  
 A shadow to amuse mankind,  
 But never frights the wise or well-fix'd mind.  
 Virtue despises human scorn,  
 And scandals innocence adorn.

Exalted on thy stool of state,  
 What prospects do I see of future fate !  
 How the inscrutables of Providence  
 Differ from our contracted sense !  
 Hereby the errors of the town,  
 That fools look out, and knaves look on.

But Defoe was one of those heroic and patriotic men who deliberately make up their minds to submit to any sacrifices, however great, for their principles, and for what they believe to be the welfare of mankind. He was prepared to go, if the necessity should arise, either to the scaffold or the stake, rather than prove wanting in fidelity to the cause of right. What he warned other honest men and true patriots to expect, he was prepared himself to confront. His

views on this subject were clearly expressed in a passage in his writings, which is well known, and which, in the early days of the *Examiner* of the two Hunts, was a motto following the title of their paper, and which has in the present year been restored on a resumption of the appearance and the features of that journal in its original form. "If I might," says Defoe, "give a short hint to an impartial writer, it would be to tell him his fate. If he resolves to venture upon the dangerous purpose of telling the naked truth, let him proclaim war with mankind *à la mode de pays*—neither to give nor to take quarter. If he tells the crimes of great men, they fall upon him with the cruel hands of the law; if he tells their virtues, if they have any, then the mob attacks him with slander. But if he regards truth, let him expect martyrdom on both sides, and then he may speak fearlessly; and this is the course I take myself."

At various intervening periods from the passing of the Act of Queen Anne, in 1712, the newspaper stamp duty caused considerable annoyance both to the Government and the newspaper proprietors. In the case of the former the annoyance arose from the ingenious devices resorted to with a view of evading the tax. And the annoyance was felt by the proprietors of newspapers as rendering more onerous, by diminishing the sale of their journals, the duties which they were compelled to pay. The number of unstamped papers published in disregard of the law at length became so great, that in 1743 the government

determined to put an end to the evil. In that year a clause was inserted in a previous Act, by which it was declared that as large numbers of unstamped newspapers, pamphlets, and other publications which were liable to the stamp duties were daily sold in the streets by obscure persons who had no settled habitation, all such hawkers of unstamped newspapers might be taken into custody of any person, and brought before a justice of the peace, who might commit them to gaol for a term of three months. And as a further inducement to persons to seize these street venders of unstamped newspapers a reward of twenty shillings was to be given to every informer who should secure a conviction. This rigorous enactment had the desired effect. Street-hawking of unstamped newspapers was at once put a stop to, and as there was nobody to sell these papers, they necessarily ceased to be printed.

## CHAPTER V.

### NEWSPAPER PROGRESS TILL THE MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Appearance of New Journals—the *St. James's Chronicle*—Increase in the Number of Newspapers—Improvement in their Character—Prevalence of Cockfighting—the *Craftsman*—Reporting Speeches in Parliament—Odd Manner of Noticing Marriages—the *Grub Street Journal*—the *Gentleman's Magazine* and Mr. Cave, the Proprietor—The American Newspaper Press—Resolution of the House of Commons against Parliamentary Reporting—Dr. Johnson as a Parliamentary Reporter—Mr. Cave and Mr. Astley before the House of Lords for Breach of Privilege—Earliest Parliamentary Reporting—Matthew Jenour—Dr. Johnson's Dislike to the Newspaper Press—Odd Titles of Newspapers—Mr. Henry Fielding, the Novelist—His Connexion with the Newspaper Press—Sir John Fielding—Mr. Henry Fielding's last Illness and Death.

AT this period of our newspaper history it was a very common thing, though scarcely ever occurring now, for the titles to be revived, under new management, of deceased journals which had been more or less popular in their day. In 1715, a new periodical, published among several others, appeared under the name of the *Spectator*. It was published twice a week. Its life was brief, having only had little more than a six months' existence. In the same year a new *Medley*, or *Daily Tatler*, was brought out on the 21st of April;

and on July 7th, that is, in rather less than three months, another *Medley* made its appearance. The title of the *Englishman* was another resuscitation this year. We find the same frequency of revival of discontinued titles, for many years afterwards. Sometimes the publication itself, as well as the title, was revived, under essentially the same editorial supervision, after intervals of some duration. This was the case in relation to the *Censor*, conducted by Lewis Theobald, the well known annotator, in eight volumes, of Shakspeare's Works. The *Censor* was commenced on April 11th, 1715, and after a brief existence was discontinued; but it was revived after an interval of a year and a half, on the first day of January, 1717, and lived to complete three goodly volumes.

But the space which I shall have to devote to our more modern periods of the Newspaper Press, precludes the possibility of my lingering longer on the first quarter of our journalistic history in the eighteenth century. Those who are curious in such matters as the details of the various journals which made their appearance during that period of our newspaper history, and the principal writers in them, I would recommend to consult Mr. Andrews's "History of British Journalism." Mr. Andrews was, and is till this hour, though his two volumes were published twelve years ago, a thorough enthusiast in newspaper history, and was so desirous to be correct in his statements, that he spared no pains, grudged no amount of time, nor any self-sacrifice, however



great, to verify the truth, where in the least doubtful, of any statement he made.

In the year 1724, the *St. James's Chronicle* was commenced. This is the only newspaper of an early date which can still boast of being alive; but it was not originally called by the name of the *St. James's Chronicle*. It first appeared under the title of the *Whitehall Evening Post*, a few years before the date which I have just mentioned, or rather took its title from the name of that journal which had just been amalgamated with the *St. James's Post*. As the *St. James's Chronicle*, the vicissitudes of the paper were numerous and great. It commenced its career as a weekly journal, but some time afterwards it was changed from a weekly to a thrice-a-week paper. I cannot give the exact date of this change, but after the lapse of a number of years, it fell into the hands of the proprietors of the late *Morning Herald*; and being printed from the matter which appeared in the latter journal, it was got up with exceedingly little expense, compared with what the expense would have been had the composition and the editorial labour been paid for, as a journal entirely unconnected with any other. It had, too, a large circulation, being the great clerical journal for very nearly a century,—a fact to be accounted for from the circumstance of its being the recognised organ of the Church and State party. It was consequently an excellent property, and continued so, though gradually falling in value, until about twenty years ago. It was then transformed into a once-a-

week paper; and in the course of time it was amalgamated with the *Press*,—for several years the organ of Mr. Disraeli, and represented by many to be chiefly his property. I am not disposed to believe the latter statement, but that it was for a long time, under a succession of editorships, the faithful representative of his sentiments, and that he wrote somewhat largely in its columns,—are facts which have never been denied. The *St. James's Chronicle* still, as I have said, lingers in life, but only retains the title in conjunction with the *Press*,—the title being the *Press and St. James's Chronicle*.

In 1724 the newspapers began to increase in number, and to diversify the nature of their general intelligence. From some of their paragraphs we learn a good deal about the customs and amusements which were then most prevalent both in the metropolis and the provinces. Skittle-playing seems to have become so common an amusement that the Middlesex magistrates deemed it their duty to make an order shutting up the skittle playgrounds, “in and about the City and Liberties of Westminster and County of Middlesex,” on the ground that these places had “a tendency to induce apprentices and servants to idle away their masters’ time, and embezzle their money.”

Cockfighting was at this time a very favourite amusement, though a barbarous one. The following notice appears in one of the newspapers of the day:—

“At the Royal Cock Pit,”—which, though not here

so stated, was in Westminster—"To-morrow, being September the 19th, there will be a great Cock Match between some gentlemen of Surrey and some gentlemen of Westminster and Northamptonshire for four guineas a match, and forty guineas the odd battle, and will continue all the week. The cocks will be put on the platform at four o'clock, as the matches will be fought with daylight." It would seem from this that the admirers of cockfighting a century and a half ago, ranged themselves into the counties to which they respectively belonged, and then entered into the contest, just as we see so often done in the case of cricket matches in the present day.

After this time, until the year 1726, nothing occurred in the way of new newspaper publications, worthy of special note; but in that year a political journal appeared, to be published twice a week, on Monday and Friday, which possessed features peculiar to itself. Its name was the *Craftsman*. In size, and in its typographical aspect generally, it was much the same as those of its contemporaries that have come under my notice. But it was remarkable for the ability and the boldness of its original writing on the Liberal side of the politics of the period. In these respects, indeed, it may be said to have constituted an era in English newspaper history. The editor was Mr. Nicholas Amherst, a barrister of Gray's Inn, and a gentleman well known in the political world in the first and second quarters of the eighteenth century. But though Amherst was the real name of the

editor of the *Craftsman*, he assumed that of "Caleb d'Anvers." For a time,—I do not know for how long,—Lord Bolingbroke was an extensive contributor to the columns of the *Craftsman*,—a journal which proved the most powerful opponent which Sir Robert Walpole ever had during his administration to encounter! The new Whig journal was a great success, not only in an intellectual and party point of view, but in a commercial sense. Its sale, we are assured, exceeded that of the *Spectator* of Addison, when at its highest point. The circulation of the *Craftsman* rose to an average of 10,000 copies each impression, but when there was anything of special interest in it, it reached a sale of 12,000 copies. With, however, the changes at that time so common in the phases of political parties, it gradually declined, and ceased to exist after it had reached the goodly number—goodly considering the ups and downs of newspaper journals in that day—of twelve volumes. Amherst, who by his accomplishments, abilities, moral courage, and fidelity to his principles as a Liberal, had achieved an unprecedented popularity and corresponding commercial success, met with the greatest ingratitude from his party. When they came into power in the notable party compromise of 1742, he was entirely neglected. Nothing was done for him. It is the old story over again. Being thus slighted and disregarded by his party, after the many self-sacrificing services which he had rendered to them, their gross ingratitude and utter neglect were too great for his sensitive spirit. He

died at Twickenham of a broken heart, in the year I have just mentioned—1742.

Of all the important and gratifying announcements ever made in the newspapers of the earlier part of the last century, the following, which appears in the *Flying Post* of April 11th, 1728, would, if true, have been the most important and most gratifying. It constitutes a promise to pay off the National Debt, without adding any new taxes. And to clothe the announcement with additional interest, the promise, or prospect held out, was made by no less a personage than George I. In a communication to Parliament, the first of the four Georges thus expresses himself: "The promise made for gradually discharging the National Debt is now become so certain and considerable, that nothing but some unforeseen event can alter or diminish it; which gives us the fairest prospect of seeing the old debts discharged without any necessity of incurring new ones." Unhappily for us, the posterity of George I.'s subjects, as well as for themselves, the "some unforeseen event" did occur to prevent the extinction of the National Debt. We wish the non-extinction of the then public debt had been all, and that there had been nothing worse than the amount remaining what it was; but unhappily the National Debt has since then become nearly twenty times greater, having been only 50,000,000*l.* when the first George held out the prospect, with a confidence almost as strong as if the extinction of the national indebted-

ness had been a matter of absolute certainty, whereas it is now approaching 900,000,000*l*.

For some years previous to 1729, reports of the proceedings in Parliament had found their way into the newspapers of the day, but they were so meagre as to be unworthy of the name of reports. They had, notwithstanding, excited the displeasure of the House of Commons, and in the year in question the attention of the House was called to the subject as being a violation of its privileges, which, unquestionably it was. The result of the attention thus drawn to the representative branch of the Legislature, was the adoption of a resolution, that to publish reports of the proceedings in the House *was* a violation of its privileges, and that in future the offenders be punished with the utmost severity. It would appear, however, that either this resolution of the House of Commons was disregarded by the proprietors of newspapers, or that it was allowed to remain, either wholly or to a great extent, a dead letter, for we find that in 1738, nine years afterwards, the new Speaker of the House of Commons brought the subject again before it. It was proposed to adopt anew the same resolution as that which had been passed in 1729; but for reasons which never transpired, the House declined to take any action in the matter. Hallam, in his *History of England*, quotes a passage from Coxe's "*Life of Sir Robert Walpole*," in reference to the debate which took place in Parliament on the occasion, to the effect



that Sir Robert Walpole, then Prime Minister, took credit to himself for having been friendly to permission being granted to newspapers to report the debates in the House of Commons, lest the prohibition should impair the liberty of the press,—for which respect for the freedom of the press he took all the greater credit to himself, as none of his predecessors had felt equal friendship for the journalism of their day.

About this period, namely, from 1730 to 1740, it was customary for the newspapers to publish notices of marriages in a form which would excite surprise if they appeared similarly-worded in the present day. I find, for example, one in the year 1731, in the following terms: “The Rev. Mr. Rogers Staines, of York, twenty-six years of age, to a Lincolnshire lady, upwards of eighty years of age, with whom he is to have 8000*l.*, and 300*l.* a year, and a coach-and-four during life only.” It will be observed that the lady’s name is not mentioned, but only the fortune which the youthful bridegroom received with his octogenarian bride. The only doubtful point is as to the time during which he was to have the 300*l.* a year, and the coach-and-four. If it was to be for the length of the bridegroom’s life, it was all that he could desire; but if it was only during the bride’s life, she being upwards of “eighty years of age,” it could have been no great matter to a bridegroom of “twenty-six years of age.”

In 1735 we meet with another notice of marriage,



in the following terms: "The Earl of Antrim, of Ireland, to Miss Bell Pennefather, a celebrated beauty, and the toast of that kingdom." Though not so frequently, yet occasionally similar more modern instances of this mode of advertising marriages were to be met with in the public journals. Curiously enough, the last instance of the kind which has met my eye, occurred in the case of the marriage of Mr. George Canning, who died while Prime Minister, in 1827. In *Aris's Birmingham Gazette*, of July 18, 1800, we find the following notice of Mr. Canning's marriage: "Yesterday the Right Hon. George Canning, Secretary of State, was married to Miss Scott, sister of the Marchioness of Titchfield, with 100,000*l.* fortune."

I come now to allude to a journal established at this time, 1731, which one would suppose, from the traditions of the first part of its title, would be something of the very lowest character, both as respects its intellectual qualities and its typographical appearance, which had yet issued from the newspaper press,—poor in point of talent, and almost hideous in the quality of its paper and the character of its print, as many of the newspapers of that and the preceding period of journalistic history, proved to be. I allude to a newspaper which at this time appeared under the title of the *Grub Street Journal*. For many years—I should say for at least forty—Grub Street, now called Milton Street, in Barbican—because Milton had lived for a long time there, had been synonymous, not only with

the poverty, but the destitution of literary men. I have before mentioned that when the Stamp Act of Queen Anne, in the year 1712, became law, Dean Swift contemptuously and malignantly spoke of the newspaper writers of that day as "Grub Street being dead,"—meaning that the tax then imposed on newspapers would be the ruin of the greater number of the then existing journals. This, as I have just said, was in the year 1712; but up till that time, and for a number of years, there was no definite society of literary men, nor any newspaper belonging to any literary class, which could be regarded as justifying the application to them or to it, of this term of reproach. But in the year 1730 some party or parties, in defiance of the contumely or scorn which were associated with the phrase "Grub Street," started a newspaper under the name of the *Grub Street Journal*. But this newspaper, so far from being of a lower class, either intellectually or in its typographical appearance, was in both respects equal to any journalistic publication of the day, and much superior to the majority of its contemporaries.

A correspondent of *Notes and Queries*, in the seventh volume of that periodical, speaks of it in these terms:—"The war against the Dunces"—the Dunces of the day—"is carried on with great spirit and wit in its pages. It is by far the most entertaining of the old newspapers, and throws no small light on the literary history of the time." In this estimate of the literary merits of the *Grub Street Journal* I concur.

Nothing has transpired that could be relied on regarding the originators of this journal, nor as to the leading writers in it. In a contemporary publication called *The Bee*, it is stated by the editor, a Mr. Budgell, that "the Rev. Mr. Russell, a non-juring clergyman, and Alexander Pope, and some other gentlemen, were at the head of the paper." But that Pope was a contributor to any extent to its pages is, I think, exceedingly doubtful. It may be that the belief that he was one of its principal writers had its origin in the fact that the *Grub Street Journal* devoted much of its space to a vindication of Pope from the assaults of his foes, who were at the time many and malignant. It was indeed insinuated that Pope was, in these papers, his own vindicator; but I cannot think it probable that Pope was in the habit of contributing to the *Grub Street Journal* in the face of what is said by Mr. A. Andrews, author of the "History of British Journalism," already repeatedly referred to. In a letter to the editor of *Notes and Queries*, in the same volume of that journal which I have mentioned, Mr. Andrews, alluding to the insinuation of Mr. Budgell that Pope was a writer for the *Grub Street Journal*, says:—The poet has himself contradicted Budgell when he retorted upon him in those terrible lines—

Let Budgell charge low Grub Street to my quill,  
And write whate'er he please,—except my will.

The words in this couplet which must have stung Budgell were the last three—"except my will,"

Budgell having been publicly charged with the forging of a will. I think it likely that another reason why Pope was supposed to have a hand in the *Grub Street Journal*, was the circumstance of quotations from his "Dunciad" following the title of a few of the earlier numbers. In the first number, for instance, we find the following quotation from the "Dunciad" preceding the introductory address:—

Dulness! whose good old cause I yet defend,  
With whom my muse began, with whom shall end!  
For thee I dim these eyes and stuff this head,  
With all such reading as was never read.

The *Grub Street Journal* has been erroneously stated in "Drake's Essays," once a work of some popularity, to have only lasted little more than two years and a half. He represents it as having ceased to be published on August 24th, 1732. So far from terminating at that time, that was about the period of its greatest prosperity. It continued to be published weekly, without the intermission of a single week, till the 29th of December, 1737, making a term of eight years. Its last impression, numbering 418, is now before me. The discontinuance of the *Grub Street Journal* is mainly ascribed to a combination on the part of the booksellers to withhold their advertisements, and to do, otherwise, all the injury in their power to the paper, because of the severity of its criticisms on the books of the day. But though this journal ceased to exist under its original title on the 29th of December, 1737, an attempt was made to

resume it under another name. It recommenced on January 5th, 1738, under the title of the *Literary Courier of Grub Street*; but the effort to re-establish the journal under the new title was a failure. It continued to be published in a manifestly languishing state for a period of six months, when it closed its existence.

In the year 1731 there appeared a monthly publication which was essentially a newspaper, though called at the time a magazine. I allude to the *Gentleman's Magazine*,—a periodical which, after having undergone many changes both in form and character, still exists, and is, consequently, in its one hundred and fortieth year. It is the oldest periodical in the British empire, and probably the oldest in the world. It still has a fair extent of circulation. In the prospectus to this magazine it was announced that the plan on which it was to be conducted was that of giving abridged extracts from the newspapers of the previous weeks. "Newspapers," it says, "are of late so multiplied as to render it impossible, unless a man make it a business, to consult them all. Upon calculating the number of newspapers it is found that besides divers written accounts, no less than two hundred half sheets per month are thrown from the press only in London, and about as many printed elsewhere in the three kingdoms; so that they are become the chief channels of amusement and intelligence." This statement would mislead if not

explained, with regard to the number of newspapers, or "pamphlets of news," as that class of publications still continued to be called. When the *Gentleman's Magazine* speaks of "no less than two hundred half sheets per month, it does not mean that there then existed that number of newspapers, but that that number were published in the course of a month. The *month* was mentioned because the new Magazine was to be published monthly. As these newspapers were for the most part published weekly, and several of them three times and twice a week, the aggregate publications during the month were given; and these, I have no doubt, were not much under, if at all, the two hundred here specified in round numbers.

The *Gentleman's Magazine*, in accordance with its prospectus, consisted at first, and for some years afterwards, solely of the news of the day, with the single exception of giving some agreeable poetry interspersed. Instead, however, of giving extracts in full from the weekly news, it frequently published what it considered the more interesting intelligence, giving in fifty or sixty lines what would have occupied three or four times as many in the newspapers in which the matter originally appeared. In this way however, though expressing no original opinions of its own, the *Gentleman's Magazine* furnished its readers with a very good idea of what had been said on the more important topics of the time by the more popular of its weekly, semi-weekly, tri-weekly, and



daily contemporaries. The actual number of journals of various kinds published in London in the year 1731,—that year, as I have said, in which the *Gentleman's Magazine* started,—was, according to a statement in the first number, twenty-two, and the number in the provinces twenty-three. It will seem strange when I mention the fact, that at this period neither Liverpool nor Glasgow possessed a single newspaper; while such towns as Reading and Bury could boast of journals presenting as good an appearance typographically as their London contemporaries. But the origin and progress of the Provincial Newspaper Press is a branch of my subject which I have set apart for future and separate consideration.

The *Gentleman's Magazine* was started by Edward Cave, printer, at St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell. This was the first magazine—Mr. Cave delighted to call it so—though essentially a monthly newspaper, that was ever published. So proud was he of the fact that the notion of a magazine originated with him, that he caused the following not very poetical lines to be engraved underneath his portrait:—

The first inventor of the monthly magazines,  
The invention of all admired; and each  
How he to be the inventor missed.

Boswell, in his "Life of Dr. Johnson," says that the Doctor, who was an intimate friend of Mr. Cave, the projector of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, mentioned to him that that publication attained to the immense sale of ten thousand copies.



Until the *Gentleman's Magazine*—which, as I have before stated, though called a magazine, was, in all its leading features, a monthly newspaper—the only thing which professed to give a report of the proceedings in Parliament, was a weekly publication, called *Boyer's Register*. The Editor, Boyer, by whose name this publication was called, was the then well-known, and still appreciated Boyer, author of “The French Dictionary.” This Mr. Boyer had been connected with several other newspapers, but it was only in the publication of his own, just named, that he gave an embodiment to the idea of reporting the proceedings in Parliament. It is, therefore, only rendering to him what I regard as his due, to state, that he should have the credit of being the first to give an outline of what took place in the Legislature. But nothing could be imagined of a more meagre character than Boyer's reports in his *Register*. Two years after the *Gentleman's Magazine*—that is, in the year 1733—made its appearance, it introduced as a new feature, somewhat copious reports of the debates in the Houses of Lords and Commons,—copious, I mean, compared with anything of the kind which had before appeared. But even its reports, though appreciated at the time, would be regarded in our day as unworthy the name of Parliamentary Reports. The speeches, as a rule, of only two or three men of celebrity, were summarized; the other speakers were not only not named, but no indications were even given as to who they were. Nor, indeed, were the real or full names

given even when the speeches were reported in the first person, implying—whether the fact was so or not, I have no means of knowing—that they were given at full length. Knowing that to give the names of the speakers at full length would be a breach of the privileges of Parliament, the various editors or proprietors of newspapers confined themselves to giving the first and last letter of the name of the party who spoke. For example, if our journals would imitate in this respect the manner of the reporters a hundred and forty years ago, they would give the name of Mr. Gladstone as Mr. G——ne; and that of Mr. Disraeli as Mr. D——i. Some of the newspapers, indeed, in the year 1733, were afraid to give even the indication I have mentioned of the parties whose speeches were reported. They contented themselves by saying that “a motion was made and supported as follows;” and that “the following reply in opposition was given to the motion.” Even the branch of the Legislature in which particular debates took place, was not distinctly specified, but simply indicated by the first and last letters of the House of Parliament in which the speeches were delivered; as, for instance, when in the hereditary House thus:—“H—— of L——ds;” and when in the representative branch of the Legislature, thus:—“H—— of C——ns.” Such was the state of things when the *Gentleman’s Magazine* introduced in 1733 into its pages, the feature of giving a report of the parliamentary debates.

Another characteristic of the reporting of the

Parliamentary debates, as they were given by the *Gentleman's Magazine*, was, that instead of being published as early as possible after the delivery of the speeches, of which reports were wanted, they did not appear until after the close of the Session. In other words, proceedings in the Commons which took place in the beginning of a Session, then usually in January, did not appear until July. In one case, the reports of the proceedings in one Parliament did not appear until a new Parliament had been elected, and was in full Session. Only conceive the possibility of such a state of things in the present day !

But late as Mr. Cave's publication was in its Parliamentary intelligence, its six months behindhand were not equal to what is recorded in a United States paper, entitled the *Boston News Letter*, published in August, 1719. The following is the paragraph alluded to :—"The undertaker of this *News Letter*, in January last, gave information that, after fourteen years' experience, it was impossible, with half a sheet a week, to carry on all the public occurrences of Europe ; to make up which deficiency, and to render the news newer and more acceptable, he has since printed, every other week, a whole sheet—whereby that which seemed old in the former half sheet becomes new now by the sheet ; which is easy to be seen by any one who will be at the pains to trace back former years, and even this time twelvemonths. We were then thirteen months behind with the foreign news, and now we are less than five months ;

so that by the sheet we have retrieved about eight months since January last, and anyone that has the *News Letter* to January next (life permitted) will be accommodated with all the news from Europe needful to be known in these parts.”

*Thirteen months* behind with the foreign news were not then go-ahead times in America,—not at least so far as the newspaper was concerned.

The mode in which, on the private inauguration of Parliamentary reporting, the process was managed by Mr. Cave, proprietor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, is thus described by Sir John Hawkins, a man of some literary note in that day:—“Cave, taking with him a friend or two, he found means to procure for them and himself admission into the gallery of the House of Commons, or to some concealed station in the other House”—the House of Lords—“and there they privately took down notes of the several speeches, and the general tendency and substance of the arguments. Thus furnished, Cave and his associates would adjourn to a neighbouring tavern, and compare and adjust their notes, by means whereof, and the help of their memories, they became enabled to fix at least the substance of what they had so lately heard and remarked. The reducing this crude matter into form was the work of a future day and an abler hand,—Guthrie, the historian, a writer for the booksellers, whom Cave retained for the purpose.”

I have specially adverted to this matter because it was the initiatory step in that Parliamentary report-

ing which is now a great institution, not only in our own but in all other civilized countries. It is, too, let me add, one of our most useful as well as most prized institutions. But to that point I shall have occasion to recur when I come to that part of my work, in which I will endeavour to give a full and faithful account of the reporting department of each of our existing morning papers. In the meantime, in order that the earlier history of Parliamentary reporting may be better understood, I must somewhat anticipate several other incidents in the newspaper history of that day. For three years from the time Cave began to publish reports of the proceedings in Parliament, he found that such a step, being a breach of the privileges of the House, and the House having passed a resolution to visit with condign punishment any one who might, in the future, be guilty of such a violation of its privileges,—became alarmed at the inevitable consequences of proceeding, in relation to that matter, in the same way as he had done before. Whether the idea was his own, or Dr. Johnson's, or that of any one else, is not known; but to escape the penalties of setting the authority of the House of Commons at nought, Cave resorted in 1738 to the expedient of prefixing to his reports of the proceedings in Parliament a notification, that it was the proceedings of the fictitious Parliament of the fictitious Empire of Lilliput, that were reported in the pages of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. This preface was in these words—"An Appendix to Captain Lemuel Gulliver's

Account of the Famous Empire of Lilliput ;” and the heading given to the reports of the proceedings in the Commons was, “Debates in the Senate of Great Lilliput.”

The efforts which were made in 1740–41 to overthrow the Ministry of Sir Robert Walpole, invested the proceedings in Parliament with a new and much deeper and more general interest. And in order that there might be a corresponding ability in the manner in which the speeches were given, Cave supplanted Guthrie by the appointment of Dr. Johnson. According to his own “Diary,” the duties of his new office began on the 19th November, 1740, and ended on the 23rd February, 1743. During all this time, and for some time afterwards, the Lilliputian expedient was continued as before. The ability with which Dr. Johnson discharged his new duties was the admiration of all who read the debates ; and his reports as regards their style are admired even at the present day.

But while the world was thus lost in admiration at what Mr. Nichols, in his “*Encyclopædia of Literary and Typographical Anecdotes*,” calls “the eloquence, the force of argument, and the splendour of language” displayed in Dr. Johnson’s reports of the debates in Parliament during the three years I have mentioned, the world little knew how much the speakers were indebted to Dr. Johnson himself for the qualities which their speeches exhibited. Their diction was so altered, that many of them could scarcely discern a trace of their own composition, as



their addresses to the House were delivered. Their speeches were in fact, so far as related to style, more the speeches of Dr. Johnson himself than the productions of those to whom their paternity was ascribed. Sir John Hawkins relates a curious anecdote in connexion with Dr. Johnson's reporting the Parliamentary proceedings of the years 1740, 1741, and 1742-3. Sir John gives the anecdote at some length, but it may be told in a few words. At a dinner given by Foote, the eminent comedian of that day, at which Lord Loughborough, Dr. Francis, the translator of "Horace," Dr. Johnson, and several other gentlemen were present, the conversation turned on the marvellous eloquence which the elder Pitt had shown in a particular speech, reading it as reported in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. The conversation was an animated one, during the greater part of which Dr. Johnson remained silent; but towards its close he struck the company with a measure of amazement which made them stare at each other for some time in silence, when he said—"That speech I wrote in a garret in Exeter Street." On the surprise of those present somewhat subsiding, Dr. Francis asked how the speech in question could be written by him,—to which question Dr. Johnson answered, "Sir, I wrote it in Exeter Street. I never was in the gallery of the House of Commons but once in my life. Cave had interest with the doorkeepers; he and the persons employed under him had admittance. They brought away the subject of discussion, the names of



the speakers, the side they took, and the order in which they rose, together with notes of the various arguments adduced in the course of the debate. The whole was afterwards communicated to me, and I composed the speeches in the form they now have in the Parliamentary debates." So that the popular belief that Dr. Johnson attended the gallery of the House of Commons to report the debates, which he had himself heard—just as our reporters for the morning papers do in our day,—has no foundation whatever. In fact, the great lexicographer has no claim in any sense to be considered a Parliamentary reporter. Instead of being a reporter, he was merely a speech-maker for members of Parliament during the period I have mentioned.

Dr. Hawkesworth, the editor, or indeed, I might almost say, author of the *Rambler*, for he wrote nearly the whole of its papers, succeeded Dr. Johnson in the office of reporting the debates in Parliament; and a more appropriate successor could not have been found, for he was not only a great admirer of Dr. Johnson, but a slavish and singularly successful imitator of his laboured and stately style. I cannot, in proof of this, forbear quoting a few of the sentences with which he concludes the *Rambler*—"The hour," he says, "is hastening in which whatever praise or censure I have acquired by these compositions, if they are remembered at all, will be remembered with equal indifference, and the tenor of them only will afford me comfort. Time, who is impatient to date my last

paper, will shortly moulder the hand that is now writing it in the dust, and still this breast that now throbs at the reflection : but let not this be read as something that relates to another ; for a few years only can divide the eye that is now reading from the hand that has written. This awful truth, however obvious and however reiterated, is yet frequently forgotten ; for surely, if we did not lose our remembrance, or at least our sensibility, that view would always predominate in our lives which alone can afford us comfort when we die." This has so much of the Johnsonian ring about it that it might almost be supposed to have actually proceeded from his own pen.

As I may not have occasion to recur, in any special manner, to Mr. Cave, in his capacity of proprietor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, it may be well here to state that though by the Lilliput expedient he succeeded in evading any unpleasant results consequent on his publishing in his journal reports of the debates in the House of Commons, he was caught, for the same offence in the year 1747, in the meshes of the House of Lords. So, too, was Thomas Astley, printer of the *London Magazine* of that day. The latter publication had followed the example set by the *Gentleman's Magazine* of reprinting the debates in either House of Parliament, which, like the House of Commons, the hereditary House regarded as a grave breach of privilege. Cave and Astley were consequently severally ordered into the custody of the

Usher of the Black Rod. The specific offence for which they were arraigned at the bar of the Lords was that of reporting the trial of Lord Lovat, who was, in that year, arraigned before his Peers on a charge of high treason, in connexion with the rebellion of 1745. Cave and Astley naturally feared that they would be severely dealt with, but instead of the fine and imprisonment which they dreaded, they were let off very lightly. They were only reprimanded, ordered to pay the fees, to confess their misconduct, implore their Lordships' pardon, and promise never to offend in the same way again. All this they did—especially Cave—in a very humiliating manner, and were forthwith set at liberty. Circumstances, however, had transpired in the interim which led Cave to believe that the Lords would not again visit them in the same manner with their displeasure, and therefore in a few years he resumed in his journal his reports of the debates in their Lordships' House.

Shortly before this time the *London Magazine*, a popular monthly periodical of that period, had recourse to the ingenious expedient of evading the responsibility of publishing the real names of the speakers in Parliament, by representing the House of Commons as a Roman Senate, and giving Roman names to the leading orators. On one occasion, at a later period, a great speech in the House of Commons was represented as having been delivered at a debating society.

Much controversy has taken place as to whether

there had not been something like parliamentary reporting for the newspapers, at least a hundred years before reports of speeches delivered in either branch of the Legislature were given either in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, or *Boyer's Register*. I can see no evidence to establish the statement made by some writers, that there were. The fact, it is true, is undeniable, that speeches spoken in Parliament were published as far back as the days of Queen Elizabeth, but these did not appear in newspapers. They were published separately, and from the manuscript of the members who delivered them. D'Ewes' "Journals of Elizabeth's Parliament," a well known work, comes under the latter category. The first volume, too, of "The Commons' Journals," contains records of several interesting debates, and furnishes important materials for the study of the history of that period, commencing with the accession of James I., and proceeding through the long legislative interregnum under his unfortunate son. Though there were many newspapers in the year 1621, the public of that day had not the slightest idea of what was said or done in the Session of that year, nor for nearly a century and a half afterwards, until the year 1766, when the more important speeches of the Session of 1621 were published from a member's manuscript. This, I need not say, had nothing to do with what we in the present day regard as the reporting of Parliamentary debates. My own impression is that several writers have been misled in relation to this matter, by the fact that nearly a century before

Cave commenced, in his *Gentleman's Magazine*, reports of the debates in Parliament, there were newspapers whose titles would have naturally led to the conclusion that they gave reports of the proceedings in the Parliaments of their day. For example, I find one newspaper, started in the year 1642, under the title of *A Grand Diurnal of the Passages in Parliament*. According to our construction of this title we would conclude that the journal in question was a daily paper, making its principal feature a report, more or less lengthened, of the debates in Parliament; but instead of that, this "Diurnal" was no daily paper at all, but a weekly, or fortnightly, or monthly, or even one published at still longer intervals. All that was intended by the term "Diurnal" was that at whatever intervals the paper may have been published a record of each day's intervening proceedings was duly given, and that such of the proceedings in Parliament as had been officially reported would be found in its columns.

Having referred to Dr. Johnson's connexion with newspaper work during the period he wrote rather than reported, the speeches of members of Parliament, it is right I should mention that from the time, March, 1743, when he ceased his connexion with Cave's *Gentleman's Magazine*—though, as I have already stated, it was in reality a monthly newspaper—he had, so far as I can learn, no other regular journalistic engagement. But somehow or other, he conceived a great dislike to the newspaper press gene-

rally, and took frequent opportunities of expressing his aversion in print. He quoted, in his periodical, the *Idler*, in the year 1758, the sarcastic definition given by Sir Henry Wotton, of the functions of an ambassador. "In," he says, "Sir Henry Wotton's peculiar definition, an ambassador is said to be a man of virtue, sent abroad to tell lies for the advantage of his country;" and then the Dictionary writer adds this remark of his own:—"A newspaper writer is a man without virtue, who writes lies at home for his own profit. For these compositions is required neither genius nor knowledge, neither industry nor sprightliness; but contempt of shame and indifference to truth are absolutely necessary."

This is condemnation which, even in the worst days of the newspaper press, was never deserved in the unqualified manner in which it is given. But who could suppose that the same pen, in the same publication, namely, the *Idler*, could afterwards have written of the same class as follows:—"One of the principal amusements of the *Idler* is to read the works of those minute historians, the writers of news, who, though contemptuously overlooked by the composers of bulky volumes, are yet necessary in a nation where much wealth produces much leisure, and one part of the people has nothing to do but observe the lives and fortunes of the other. To us who are regaled every morning and evening with intelligence, and are supplied from day to day with materials for conversation, it is difficult to conceive how man can subsist without



a newspaper, or to what entertainment companies can assemble in those wide regions of the earth that have neither Chronicles nor Magazines, neither Gazettes nor Advertisers, neither Journals nor Evening Posts. All foreigners remark that the knowledge of the common people of England is greater than that of any other country. This superiority we undoubtedly owe to the rivulets of intelligence which are continually trickling among us, which every one may catch, and of which every one partakes."

As every one knows, who is acquainted with the life of the prince of lexicographers, he was of an impulsive and passionate disposition, and the severe and coarse terms in which he spoke in my first quotation of newspaper writers, may have been an ebullition of this kind. It is at least a charitable view to take of the language he employed on the occasion.

Let me do a further act of justice to the memory of Dr. Johnson. I have adverted to the fact that the universal belief that he was for three sessions an actual reporter of the proceedings in Parliament, in the sense of reporting faithfully what he had heard with his own ears in the gallery of the House of Commons,—just as the reporters of the morning papers in our day do,—was wholly without foundation, and that the speeches were in reality his own, not those of the members to whom he ascribed them. I might have gone further than I did in my condemnation of Dr. Johnson's conduct in this matter. I might have denounced it as immoral,—as constituting a flagrant



and systematic practice of imposture on the public. The justice which I am anxious to render to his memory consists in recording the fact, that towards the close of his life, if not sooner, he himself saw the immorality of his conduct in this matter. About a week or so before his death, which took place in 1784, he said to Mr. Nichols, as mentioned in "The Literary Anecdotes" of the latter, that the only thing connected with his writings which he looked back upon with regret, were his accounts of debates in Parliament, published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, but he added, as a fact which he regarded as an extenuation of his conduct in relation to that matter, that "he did not think at the time that he was imposing on the world."

There was a man of the name of Matthew Jenour who for nearly half a century played a prominent part in the newspaper world. We first hear of him in the year 1724 as conducting the *Flying Post*, one of the eighteen political journals then published in London; but my principal reason for referring to him now is to mention the fact, that in his person the important point was first decided, as to whether it was competent for a public company to institute in its corporate capacity legal proceedings against an individual. The point was raised by an action brought against this Matthew Jenour, then the responsible editor of the *Daily Advertiser*, which had some short time before been set on foot. This was in 1739, and the prosecutors were the East India

Company. The action was instituted against Jenour on the ground that in the journal which he conducted he had preferred a charge against one of the directors of the Company of raising the price of green tea by speculative transactions in that article. The trial took place in the Court of King's Bench in Michaelmas term, 1740, and the judgment was against Jenour. The Court ruled that it was competent for a public company to take proceedings, in its corporate capacity, against one or more individuals alleged to have preferred a groundless charge calculated to injure the character of any member of the company. The report of this new and interesting case is given at length in "Barnewall and Alderson's Reports," and the soundness of the ruling of the Court of King's Bench has never, so far as I know, been called in question.

Not only were strange titles to the newspapers of the day continued, more or less frequently, during the first half of the eighteenth century, but new expedients were adopted for promoting their circulation. In 1738 a newspaper was started under the title of *The Generous London Morning Advertiser*. Immediately after the title there was this standing announcement:—"Given Gratis to those Persons who are or will become Subscribers to the Numbers of the Family Bible, or other Books published by William Rayner." The adjective "generous" was, I have no doubt, employed to express the liberality of giving the paper gratis. This must appear a

strange mode of ensuring circulation to a morning newspaper, and surprise will naturally be felt as to how the expedient could have commercially succeeded. Yet, when it is remembered that at this period in the history of the English press, there was no stamp on newspapers, and *The Generous London Morning Advertiser* consisted only of four quarto pages, printed in a slightly larger type than the *Edinburgh* or *Quarterly Review*, and that each number of the "Family Bible," or other books in return for the purchase of which the newspaper was to be given gratuitously, was published at a high price,—the commercial wisdom of the device becomes comprehensible. At all events, there is no doubt that it did succeed, for the number now before me is "983," which shows that the idea had answered for nearly three years. It may be well to mention that the *London Morning Advertiser* of the present day is not identical with *The Generous London Morning Advertiser* of the year 1738,—the present *Morning Advertiser* not having been established till the year 1794.

Among the eccentric titles which still continued to be given to new journals, there was one, in 1749, published under the odd title of *All Alive and Merry; or the London Daily Post*. It took for its motto, "Necessity has no Law." The reason for selecting this motto does not appear in the character of the publication, which consisted only of two quarto pages. Possibly, however, a reason may have been given in the first number, which is not to be found in the

British Museum. It was one of the features of this "Mercurial," as very many of the papers were then termed, to contain some of the Joe Miller class of jests. The one which first met my eye on taking up the *All Alive and Merry* journal, was the following, which is a fair specimen of the others:—"Of all knaves, there's the greatest hope of a Cobbler; for, though he be ever so wild a fellow, he is still *mending*."

It will have been observed, from repeated statements which I have made in preceding parts of this work, that ever since the establishment of regular newspapers, several of the best known literary men of the various periods mentioned, were connected with newspaper journalism, either as proprietors, or writers, or both. This was especially the case in the middle of the last century. The Rebellion of 1745 created much consternation in the country, as the prospects of the Pretender seemed for a time to be somewhat encouraging for his cause. The friends of the reigning dynasty became, of course, correspondingly warmer in their adherence, and energetic in its advocacy. Probably no one was more attached to the House of Brunswick, or more zealous in its defence, than Henry Fielding, who by this time had acquired a high reputation as author of "Joseph Andrews," published in 1742. With the view of giving all the aid he could to the Royal Family in this alarming crisis in their history, which it was possible for him to render, he started, on his own

account, a paper under the title of the *True Patriot*. Commercially it was a failure, and even in a purely journalistic sense, it was the reverse of successful. It did not obtain much reputation, and as a natural consequence, its existence, so far from being prolonged, only lasted from the 5th of November, 1745, Guy Fawkes Day, till the middle of April, 1746,—not even a period of five months. It is true that a few years before this Fielding was connected with a paper called the *Champion*; but the connexion did not last long. Soon after, however, the failure of the *True Patriot*, he resolved on making another attempt at journalism,—whether on his own account only, or in concert with others, is a point which I cannot determine. But be that as it may, we find that this other paper, called the *Covent Garden Journal*, was not more successful than the *True Patriot*. It only lasted a few weeks longer than the latter. It did not survive more than six months. He contributed, however, after the discontinuance of the latter paper, to a journal called the *Jacobite*, whose principles were the reverse of its title; but I cannot learn that his contributions displayed any remarkable journalistic talent, or attracted any attention. Henry Fielding, there is every reason to believe, was more extensively connected, as a contributor to the newspaper press of his day than is generally supposed. Some have indeed gone so far as to say that Fielding became editor of the *Public Advertiser* in its earlier days, and before the names of

Woodfall and Junius were heard of in connexion with it. There is not, so far as I am acquainted with the newspaper history of the period, the shadow of a ground for the assumption. Fielding, like many other popular authors, was no eminent journalist. His efforts, however, in that way did not go unrewarded. His advocacy of the cause of the reigning family procured for him the appointment of Chief Magistrate at Bow Street Police Court.

Mr. Henry Fielding had a step-brother, Sir John Fielding, who was contemporary with him for more than twenty years, and who being a man of some literary reputation, and also a magistrate, was often confounded with the great novelist. It may be mentioned as a proof of the kind appreciation of the friendly offices of others, however slight they might be, that on one occasion, after his recovery from a long and dangerous illness, the first thing Sir John Fielding did was to insert an advertisement in the leading newspapers of the day, thanking those who had called to enquire about his health during his illness, but to whom, not having left their cards or their names, he was unable to express his thanks privately. In the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* of the 17th April, 1770, I find, what I suppose, in modern phraseology would be called a "card," the following, dated "April 16th, 1770:"—"Sir John Fielding returns thanks to those numerous friends who have



made kind inquiries after his health, but who left neither card nor name. Thinks they did him much honour." I assume from the fact of meeting with nothing similar in my researches into newspaper journals of Sir John Fielding's day, that it was not customary at that time thus to return thanks for kind inquiries into one's health, where no indication was given of the name or address of the inquirer, and, if so, this public mode of thanking his friends shows that Sir John Fielding was, as I have said, both a kind and courteous man.

Henry Fielding was a man of brilliant ability as a novelist. It is the general opinion that his "Tom Jones" is the best novel ever written. Lord Byron called him "the prose Homer of human nature." The reading world has derived so much gratification from his "Joseph Andrews," "Tom Jones," and other works of fiction,—not omitting some of his dramatic productions—that one cannot help regretting that he was called away at so early a period of his life, having died in his forty-seventh year; and still more the causes of his death. These were chiefly his early excesses. It is due, however, to his memory to say that in his various works he always commended virtue and condemned vice. With regard to the follies and immoralities which characterized his conduct soon after emerging into manhood, and for some time subsequently, he has recorded in the prologue to his "Modern Husband," the deep regret he felt in later life at the course he then



pursued. In that prologue, speaking of himself, he says:—

At length, repenting frolic flights of youth,  
 Once more he flies to Nature and to Truth;  
 In Virtue's just defence aspires to fame,  
 And courts applause without the applauder's shame.

Fielding was coarsely and unceasingly assailed during the time he was a newspaper editor, or known contributor, by contemporary editors of journals, in some instances because of opposite party views, but probably more because of personal dislike; but an ample compensation to his memory for this abuse has been rendered in the "Life of Fielding," which proceeded wellnigh fifty years ago from the pen of a no less popular author than Sir Walter Scott.

Fielding died on the 8th of October, 1754, at Lisbon, where he had gone in the hope of restoring his health, which was so bad, through dropsy and a combination of other diseases brought on by the previous irregularities of his life, that it made him a lamentable object to look at. Yet amidst all this bodily wreck, he retained some of the finest feelings of our nature, as is evident from the following passage extracted from entries in his "Journal," on the day he left London for Lisbon,—only three months and a half before his death. Writing under date June 26th, 1754, Mr. Fielding says: "On this day the most melancholy sun I ever beheld arose and found me awake at my house at Fordbrook. By the light of

this sun, I was, in my own opinion, last to behold and to take leave of some of those creatures on whom I doted with a mother-like fondness, guided by nature and passion, and uncured and unhardened by all the doctrines of that philosophical school where I had learned to bear pains and to despise death. In this situation, as I could not conquer nature, I submitted entirely to her, and she made as great a fool of me as she had ever done of any woman whatever; under pretence of giving me leave to enjoy, she drew me in to suffer, the company of my little ones during eight hours; and I doubt whether in that time I did not undergo more than in all my distemper."

There is not only something touchingly tender in the sentiments embodied in this brief passage, but something exquisitely beautiful in the language in which they are expressed. Who can help feeling the deepest regret that any one possessing so fine a mind and warm a heart, should have been consigned to the grave at the comparatively early age of forty-eight, by the dissipated life which he had been taught to live through listening to, and acting on the doctrines of that philosophical school "in which he had been taught to bear pains and to despise death."

Mr. Fielding was a voluminous writer, though but comparatively few of his works are now known. Mr. Frederick Lawrence, in his "Life of Fielding," gives the titles of exactly fifty productions of his pen; but

the great majority of their number consist of pamphlets which possessed only a temporary interest; of dramas, and of republications of his contributions to the Newspaper Press. The "Joseph Andrews" and "Tom Jones" of Henry Fielding will, however, be alone sufficient to hand down his name and fame to generations yet to come.

## CHAPTER VI.

### TEN YEARS' NEWSPAPER HISTORY.

Dr. Smollett—The *Briton*—The *North Briton*—Mr. John Wilkes—Press Prosecutions in the Middle of the Eighteenth Century—Circulation of Newspapers—The *Middlesex Journal*—The *Public Ledger*—Oliver Goldsmith—The *General Advertiser*—Revival of the Question of Parliamentary Reporting—Proceedings against the Lord Mayor by the House of Commons for a Breach of Privilege—Horne Tooke.

WE are now approaching a period in the history of the Newspaper Press of Great Britain which will ever occupy a prominent place in our journalistic annals. In the year 1762, on May the 29th, Dr. Smollett, the author of "Roderick Random" and the "Continuation of Hume's History of England," started a newspaper under the title of the *Briton*. It was no secret that, though started in Smollett's name, it was at Lord Bute's suggestion, and that the funds were supplied by him, he being then the Prime Minister of George III. This paper, edited, as I have said, by Smollett, had only a brief existence, having ceased before six months had elapsed from its commencement. I refer to it, in connexion with our early newspaper history, because the decidedly strong part it took, in its very first number, in favour of the Bute Minis-

try, and of Toryism generally, led to the establishment of another, in a week thereafter, which will live not in newspaper annals only, but in the history of England. I allude to the starting, in eight days after the appearance of Smollett's paper, the *Briton*, of the *North Briton*, by the notable John Wilkes, then member for the county of Middlesex. In this enterprise Wilkes was assisted by Lord Temple and by John Churchill, a well-known poet and satirist of his day. There can scarcely be a doubt that Lord Temple assisted Wilkes pecuniarily as well as by his contributions to the pages of the *North Briton*. But, be that as it may, the paper made gradual progress, by the boldness and the dash of its writers, until it came to "The Forty-fifth" number, when one of its articles created quite a sensation in all parts of the country. It may, indeed, be doubted whether any article in any of our past or present newspapers ever excited so profound and universal an interest. It boldly and broadly charged the King with having uttered downright falsehood in his speech on the opening of Parliament in the year 1762. The House of Commons—of which, as I have just said, Wilkes was at the time a member—took up the matter, and passed a resolution expressive of their unqualified condemnation of that part of the number which related to the King.

In the meantime, the then Secretary of State for the Home Department had instituted proceedings against the printer and publisher of the incriminated

number of the *North Briton*. The printer and publisher having been taken into custody on a general order issued by the Secretary of State, they swore to the fact that the paper in question was written by Wilkes. He was accordingly arrested, and after examination committed to the Tower. Meanwhile, the House of Commons reconsidered the matter. The result was that, after a prolonged and animated debate, they condemned the sentiments and language of the forty-fifth number of the *North Briton*; but they passed a vote which had the effect of procuring the release of Wilkes from his imprisonment in the Tower. But the House of Commons took care not to be suspected of identifying themselves with Wilkes in any way. To make that clear to the King and the country, they passed a resolution declaring that the privileges of the House did not extend to the writing and publishing of seditious libels. But they also passed a resolution to the effect, "that the general warrant issued by the Home Secretary for the arrest of Wilkes, and of the printer and publisher of the incriminated number of the *North Briton*, was illegal." The result of this resolution was not only the release of Wilkes from his imprisonment in the Tower, but also the institution of actions for damages for false arrest on his part, and that of the printer and publisher of the *North Briton*. The point was tried in the Courts of Law, and heavy damages were awarded to the three parties for their illegal arrest. But previous to this, the House of Commons ordered No. 45 of the *North*



*Briton* to be publicly burnt in Cheapside by the hangman, and also ordered Wilkes to attend at their bar. With this latter order Wilkes, even had he been so disposed, could not have complied, as he was suffering severely at the time from a wound which he had received in a duel,—the second duel he had fought in response to challenges he received from parties who felt themselves aggrieved by his writings in the *North Briton*. Soon after this, Wilkes was expelled from the House of Commons by a resolution passed by the House, partly in consequence of his disregard of its orders, and partly on account of the seditious character of his writings.

The proceedings in the case of Wilkes and the *North Briton* had, as might have been expected, the effect of directing the attention of the public more than ever to the political journalism of the day; and the natural result was that, while the existing papers increased in circulation, new ones started. Dr. Johnson, writing in 1758, in his periodical, the *Idler*, refers to the then increasing popularity of newspapers and the consequent increase in their numbers, though, by a strange perversity of judgment, arising from his hostility to newspapers, he repudiates the notion that their increase in number or circulation is accompanied with an increase of knowledge among the people. “Journals,” he says, “are daily multiplied without increase of knowledge. The tale of the morning paper is told in the evening, and the narrations of the evening are brought up again in the

morning. These repetitions indeed are a waste of time, but they do not shorten it. The most eager peruser of news is tired before he has completed his labour; and many a man who enters the coffee-house in his nightgown and slippers is called away to his shop or dinner before he has well-nigh considered the state of Europe." There is evidently here an indication of the lexicographer's traditional dislike to the newspaper press, which is somewhat ungracious, seeing that he made his first start in literary life through his connexion with a monthly newspaper, in the capacity of a reporter of Parliamentary debates. But the fact is, notwithstanding, still the same,—that about this time the number of newspapers had greatly increased, and that there was a corresponding increase, on the part of the people, of a thirst for such information as it was the province of the newspaper to furnish.

For some considerable time Wilkes was regarded as a firm and fearless advocate of freedom, which undoubtedly he was; and he was consequently exceedingly popular, not only with the masses, but with many persons of position in society. But the extreme habitual coarseness of his language, and the personal rudeness of his manner in every collision which took place between him and any one else, and the known gross immoralities of his life,—caused his popularity among the better classes of society to gradually dwindle away, until at last he lost personally the esteem of all intelligent and right-minded

men. Regarded, however, notwithstanding the violence of his political conduct, and the gross immoralities of his private life, as the impersonation of the cause of political liberty, Wilkes continued to be several times re-elected, both by the county of Middlesex and the City of London, to the House of Commons, but was as often expelled from it. After one of the most stormy lives which probably a public man ever led, the career of this restless and reckless demagogue was closed by death on December 26th, 1792, at the age of seventy. The *North Briton*, after the publication of the notable "No. 45," was brought out regularly till it reached No. 217, by Mr. William Bingley, a bookseller in the Strand, although he was committed to Newgate on an attachment in connexion with the publication. In four months afterwards, for not giving bail to answer interrogatories put to him relative to No. 47, he had to remain in gaol for two years. Though, I ought to observe, the *North Briton* closed its separate existence with the publication of the 217th number, Mr. Bingley incorporated it with a serial which he had started a short time before, under his own name; but that newspaper was not only practically the death of the *North Briton*, but even the fact of its being so incorporated was soon entirely forgotten.

I come now to speak generally of the condition of the newspapers in the interval between 1760 and 1770. That was in many respects an interesting period in the history of political journalism. There

was one paper, of which comparatively little is now known, even by those who have paid special attention to the newspaper history of the eighteenth century, which was, during those ten years, a newspaper of great popularity and power. The title of the journal to which I allude was the *Middlesex Journal*. It was held in shares, and some moneyed men, in order to have a sort of conventional right to a place in its columns, for the expression of their sentiments, paid large sums for shares in the property. Every one conversant with the political history of the county, knows that Middlesex is traditionally notable for the thorough Liberalism of its political sentiments. It was especially so at the period—that is, about a century ago—to which I allude. Its views in the Press might therefore be expected to be equally Liberal. It was so. The *Middlesex Journal* was a bold and able advocate of the most extreme Liberalism. Universal suffrage, annual Parliaments, and vote by ballot, were the points to the uncompromising advocacy of which it had pledged itself; and its pledge it faithfully redeemed. What was then called “the popular cause” had indeed an uncompromising and zealous advocate in the *Middlesex Journal*. The paper was remarkable for having opened its columns to a succession of men of talent, who, though unknown to fame at the time, afterwards acquired great popularity as political writers, and whose names are not only still known to fame, but will live in the history of England. Among those who may be said

to have made their *début* as political writers in the *Middlesex Journal*, I may mention the names of John Wilkes, Junius, Horne Tooke, and Chatterton, the poet. It had, like all the Opposition journals of that time, to undergo prosecution for sedition against the State, or for libels against some one or other of the members of the existing Government. Like many other newspapers conducted with great talent, and commercially prosperous for a time, the *Middlesex Journal* began to decline in circulation and diminish in its profits, until after some years—the specific year I have failed to learn—it ceased to exist.

I have already spoken of two papers whose second title was *Advertiser*,—one the *Public Advertiser*, and the other the *Daily Advertiser*, which were popular and influential about this time. A third *Advertiser*, called the *General Advertiser*, made its appearance in 1766. I have been unable to ascertain any particulars, containing sufficient interest to be recorded, respecting the origin, the progress, and termination of this journal. The only thing I have learnt respecting it is, that its first editor was the Mr. William Cooke who afterwards acquired some reputation as the biographer of Macklin and Foote, two of the best known men of their day in dramatic and histrionic matters.

At this time the irrepressible question of the legality of reporting the debates in Parliament again cropped up; and the House of Commons

was seized with a fit of determination to put down this systematic breach of its privileges. As a preliminary step to the carrying out of this determination, they read and confirmed the resolution passed by the House in 1728:—"That on the discovery of the author, printers, or publishers of any such written or printed newspapers"—meaning reports of debates in the House—"the House will proceed against the offenders with the utmost severity." Having forthwith found several such "offenders," the House, in accordance with this resolution, ordered the printers of four of the leading journals—the *Public Advertiser* of Woodfall among the number—to be brought to the bar of the House. They, as a matter of course, duly appeared; but finding the feeling to be almost universal in the country, that the public must have reports of the proceedings in Parliament, the only punishment which the House ventured to inflict on the prisoners at the bar, was a reprimand and the exaction of an apology on their knees, with an order to pay the fees. This satisfaction being rendered, the accused were discharged. The printers of Liberal papers in those days were men of great fearlessness, and therefore were not to be frightened or diverted from doing what they regarded as their duty, by such punishment as that I have described. They persisted, as if nothing had happened, in reporting the debates in Parliament as before, and the House, seeing that the feeling of the country in favour of the debates being reported, was strong as well as all but



universal, Parliament connived at this daily breach of its privileges.

But after the lapse of five more years, the question of the breach of the privileges of the House on the part of the newspapers, was once more, and for the last time, brought before it. The printer of the *London Evening Post*, having taken no notice of a summons which he, in common with the printers of several other journals, had received to appear at the bar of the House to answer the charge of a breach of the privileges of the House, by reporting its debates,—he was ordered to be taken into custody for contempt of the House. The Sergeant-at-Arms, having received orders to see that the delinquent printer should be at once arrested, sent a messenger to execute the commands of the House; and the messenger duly executed his instructions by taking the printer into custody in his own house in the City. On being arrested, he at once applied to the then Lord Mayor for the protection due to him as a citizen, and the Lord Mayor found that the printer of the *London Evening Post* had been illegally arrested,—the warrant for his arrest not being backed by a magistrate of the City, which the law required that it should be. When, therefore, the Sergeant-at-Arms demanded, in the name of the House of Commons, that the prisoner and messenger should be given up to him, he refused. The House of Commons felt affronted at this defiance of its authority, and the result was frequent and stormy debates on the subject. All manner of pains



and penalties were in the first instance threatened on the Lord Mayor for daring to defy the Commons; but the ultimate result of the conflict between the Commons and the Civic Corporation, was the virtual defeat of the former; and from that time the question of the right to report the debates in Parliament, so far as its practical bearings were concerned, was shelved for ever,—at least, the practice has been tacitly sanctioned ever since.

Though the House of Commons had hitherto been much more industrious than the House of Lords in punishing newspaper proprietors for breaches of privilege, or libels against itself or some of its members, the hereditary branch of the Legislature had not been idle in this respect, at particular periods of the second and third quarters of the eighteenth century; but certainly the most strange ground for prosecuting a printer that I have ever known to be urged either by the House of Lords, or by any other body, was one in the case of Mr. Meres, the printer of the *London Evening Post*. In the year 1764, Mr. Wilkes, who had fled to France to escape the imprisonment which he knew to be consequent on his conviction for libel, carried on a correspondence with Mr. Alman, his friend and admirer, and to whom I shall refer hereafter. Mr. Wilkes, in one of his letters to Mr. Alman, made a brief but ludicrous allusion to the Rev. Mr. Trail, a Scotchman, “as administering to the English subjects in Paris in Spirituals, though a Peer was our ambassador, and David Hume his secre-

tary." I confess I cannot see any point in this. But be that as it may, on the appearance of the paragraph in the *London Evening Post*, the Earl of Marchmont moved that the House take proceedings against the printer for a breach of its privileges, in mentioning the name of one of its members. The result was that the printer of the *London Evening Post* was fined 100*l.* The precedent thus set by the House of Lords was industriously followed up by itself. In several succeeding years printers of newspapers were fined each session, whenever they mentioned, by accident or otherwise, the name of a Peer of the realm. Who could believe that little more than a century ago such a state of things could have existed in this country, which boasted as much then as it does now, of being pre-eminently the land of liberty.

It is well we should pause here to glance at what, at the beginning of the second half of the eighteenth century, the sale of newspapers was, compared with what it was at the period ending in 1853. The comparison will be read with interest, the facts and figures in that prolonged interval being such as we can rely on. In 1753 the number of stamps issued to newspapers was 7,411,757,—the population of England being the same year 6,186,336. From that period, with slight exceptional cases of fluctuation consequent on war or peace, or other special causes, the circulation of newspapers continued to increase until 1853, when the number in Great Britain reached no less than 128,178,900,—the increase in the population

in the meantime being 27,724,849. It will be seen from this statement that while the increase in the population during the century beginning with 1753, and ending with 1853, was little more than quadrupled, the increase in the circulation of newspapers was no less, in the same period of time, than seventeen times as great at the close as at the commencement. What makes this enormous increase in the circulation of newspapers during the 100 years ending 1853, compared with what it was at the beginning, remarkable—is the fact that while in 1756 the stamp duty was three-halfpence, it was increased in 1789 to twopence; in 1804 to threepence halfpenny, and in 1815 to fourpence, at which it continued till 1836, when it was reduced to one penny. But at the beginning of 1836, when the stamp duty of fourpence was in full operation, the circulation of newspapers had increased from 7,411,757 in 1753, to 39,432,200. From 39,432,200 in the year 1836, the circulation went on increasing till 1853, when under the influence of the reduction to a penny of the stamp, in conjunction with the growing intelligence and increasing commercial prosperity of the age, newspapers reached the immense sale of 122,178,501. While the stamp duty was fourpence the general price of each paper was sevenpence, and on the reduction of the duty to a penny the general price of the paper was reduced to fivepence.

Still more amazing was the increase in the circulation of newspapers in Great Britain which took place on

the remission of the stamp duty of a penny. Though that remission did not take place till the beginning of 1857, no fewer than 107 newspapers were started in anticipation of the abolition of the duty, making the total number in the United Kingdom, at the beginning of that year, 711.

But I am anticipating historical dates, and therefore must recur to the period to which I was referring when I deviated from the historical path along which I was walking. Shortly after the middle of last century—in 1759, as stated by Mitchell's "Newspaper Press Directory," but other authorities say 1760—a newspaper was started which still has a curious kind of existence. I allude to the *Public Ledger*. It had for a considerable time a position among the newspapers of London, but it has ceased, as will be seen hereafter, to have any "name," though still possessing a local habitation. That the *Public Ledger* was a journal which in its earlier days was considered one of no inconsiderable importance, may be inferred from the fact, that soon after its establishment it could number among its stated contributors no less distinguished a literary man than Oliver Goldsmith. His papers were signed by a phrase,—“A Citizen of the World,”—which for more than a century has been to all who read the English language familiar as “household words.” For his first contribution, as stated in his “Life” by John Foster, he received as a remuneration two guineas. Goldsmith then entered into an engagement with the proprietors,

whose names I am unacquainted with, to contribute two articles a week, for each of which he received a guinea. In the lengthened intervening period of more than a century, the *Public Ledger* has undergone many great changes. As to what its condition is at this present date—June, 1871—I will leave the reader to form his own opinion, after quoting what the writer in Mitchell's "Newspaper Press Directory" says of it. "It is," he says, "exclusively commercial, and may seem rather dull and dry to all but buyers and sellers. Full of 'coffee and cocoa,' 'cotton' and 'corn,' 'rice' and 'sugar,' 'tallow' and 'tea,' 'exports' and 'imports,' 'drawbacks' and 'duties,' it affords very valuable information to the merchant or large trader, and those whom it directly concerns."

This though brief, is graphic. It is not often that one meets with a better description of anything, in so short a space. To me there is something sad to read these few lines, remembering my personal intimacy with Mr. Mallalieu, who was its proprietor and editor for some time between 1832 and 1834, when, under the second title of the *Guardian and Public Ledger*, it was one of the most ably conducted of the morning papers of that day, so far as related to the writing of its leading articles, which were chiefly from the pen of Mr. Mallalieu himself,—at that time the principal writer of the political articles in *Blackwood's Magazine*.

It is due to the memory of the late Mr. William Blackwood to repeat what Mr. Mallalieu used to

mention to me, that he was, not only always liberal, but often princely so in the amount of his remuneration to authors and to contributors to his magazine. Mr. Mallalieu on one occasion was a little embarrassed by the liberality of his remuneration for an article in the magazine, and said it was a great deal too much, as the article was short. "Oh," remarked Mr. Blackwood, "I never pay for literature by the yard."

The *Guardian and Public Ledger*, could also boast of having as its musical critic Mr. C. L. Gruneisen,—a gentleman admitted by all who are competent to form an opinion on the subject, to be unsurpassed as a musical critic in the present day.

It is, I repeat sad, that a journal whose columns were enriched by the frequent contributions of Goldsmith, and which little more than thirty years ago was politically edited by Mr. Mallalieu, and whose musical department was under Mr. Gruneisen's control, should now be in the position described by Mitchell's "Newspaper Directory." I cannot help exclaiming, intimately acquainted as I am with the circumstances,

To what base uses we may return, Horatio!

About the period of which I have been latterly speaking, there appeared in the newspaper world—though I am not aware that he was regularly engaged as a paid contributor—a man who soon acquired a wide reputation alike for the liberality of his principles, the moral courage which he displayed in asserting them, the sacrifices which he made for them, and the



talent which characterized all his political writings. The party to whom I refer is John Horne Tooke, whose celebrity is as great, if not in some respects greater now than it was when he was alive. His original name was John Horne, but he added that of "Tooke" to it in consideration of a friend of that name leaving him at his death 8000*l*. If Horne Tooke had never done anything else than written his "Diversions of Purley," his name would be perpetuated for an indefinite period yet to come. He was a clergyman when he first came before the public, and though he afterwards became a barrister, and ultimately a member of the House of Commons, the sobriquet of "Parson Tooke" stuck to him during the remainder of his life. On his entering the political arena he was a Liberal,—what would nowadays be called an advanced Liberal, or an ultra Democrat. At first he identified himself with John Wilkes, and the party of whom the latter demagogue was the chief. Among the newspapers of his day for which Horne Tooke wrote, was the *Public Advertiser*, and almost at the same time that the brilliant Letters of Junius appeared in that journal. But though commencing his political career as an admirer and supporter of Wilkes, Horne Tooke did not long continue to be so; and when the political rupture between the two ultra Liberals took place, Mr. Horne Tooke fiercely assailed Wilkes in the *Public Advertiser*. Nor did he spare Junius himself in the very journal in which his polished and trenchant letters were first

brought before the public. Mr. Tooke's connexion with the Newspaper Press had something to do with a great historical fact,—one which will ever live in the annals of the country, and of which the City of London is, and will continue to be proud, so long as its Corporation lasts. I refer to the part which he played in 1770, when George III. censured from the throne an address presented to him by the civic authorities of London. Indignant at the affront thus offered to them by the Sovereign, and being fired by the patriotic spirit which has always characterized that body, they waited upon him with another address, couched in the usual loyal language, but reiterating their prayer for the dismissal of Ministers, and the dissolution of Parliament. It fell to the lot of Mr. William Beckford, the Lord Mayor of the day, to address the King verbally, as the head of the deputation, and as the chief magistrate of the city. They were again repulsed, and told that, to accede to their request, would imperil the royal prerogative, and prove dangerous to the constitution of the country. Horne Tooke anticipating such a result, furnished Lord Mayor Beckford with what he conceived to be such a reply to the royal reception as he ought to give. But Beckford got so confused in the presence of royalty that he could not remember,—at any rate could not speak the speech which Tooke had prepared for him. On meeting Beckford in St. James's, on his return from his unpleasant interview with the Sovereign, and learning from himself that, owing to his con-

fusion, he did not know what he said, Tooke cried out—"But your speech must appear in the papers, and I will write it for you." This was accordingly done; and next day a speech, represented to have been spoken in the presence of royalty, by Lord Mayor Beckford, but of which a word had never been uttered, appeared in all the journals of the morning. This incident, somehow or other, never became generally known; and the natural consequence was, that Mr. Beckford became one of the most popular Lord Mayors that ever sat in the civic chair, on account of his supposed patriotism, his independence, and the fearless manner in which he confronted the monarch on the throne, in vindicating the cause of civil, political, and religious liberty. A fine statue of Lord Mayor Beckford was, some time afterwards, erected in the Guildhall to commemorate this great event,—which never took place,—with the invented speech which was put into Beckford's mouth, carved word for word on the marble of which the statue was made! Dr. Johnson did a great deal for Members of Parliament during the three years that he professedly acted as reporter of the debates in the Legislature, by making speeches for them, instead of giving their own. But the service which the great lexicographer did to those members was not for a moment to be compared with that which Horne Tooke rendered to Lord Mayor Beckford, by furnishing a speech to him which at once acquired all the importance and dignity of a great historical document, and which will not only

occupy a place in the annals of the country, but procured for him a marble statue which will, in all probability, perpetuate his personal likeness as well, for centuries to come.

But to return to Horne Tooke. He was subjected on several occasions to fines and imprisonments for the violence and libellous character of his contributions to the Newspaper Press. He joined "The London Corresponding Society," which not only had its ramifications in many parts of the provinces, but was known to number no fewer than fifty branches. It certainly was a most powerful political confederation, and filled the Government of the day with great alarm. Its avowed aims and objects were of so democratic a character as to imperil the reigning dynasty. Mr. Tooke, as one of the Council, was committed to the Tower on a charge of high treason, and tried with several others of the Council on that charge in 1794. The celebrated Lord Erskine conducted their defence; and his magnificent eloquence, associated with consummate skill, obtained an acquittal. Mr. Thelwall, one of the accused, a man of great eminence at the time, spoke to me nearly forty years after the trial took place, in terms of as great enthusiasm and boundless admiration of the ability and eloquence of Erskine, as if it had been more than human.

There was one very extraordinary incident in the life of Horne Tooke, which some persons might have some difficulty in deciding as to whether it was to be ascribed to a love of notoriety or patriotism. I confess

I cannot concur with those who attribute it to the latter cause. The incident was this,—that in the year 1777 he presented a petition to Government, that he might be put into the pillory. I do not possess a sufficient amount of charity, to believe that pure patriotism dictated this course. I trace it to that insatiable love of notoriety, and the consuming desire to be regarded as a patriot, which were the chief characteristics of his life. Had he really wished to have conferred on him the notoriety of being placed and pelted in the pillory, he had only to set at defiance, in any of the newspapers for which he wrote, the laws against sedition, to have his wishes for an exhibition in the pillory gratified. The Rev. Dr. Leat, an able, though not much known because chiefly anonymous, writer in the *St. James's Chronicle* of that day, turned the petition and the petitioner into racy ridicule, to the great gratification of all who viewed the incident, as I do, as a mere empirical expedient to gain credit for a virtue which Mr. Horne Tooke did not possess.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE LETTERS OF JUNIUS.

Some of the many Persons to whom the Authorship of the "Letters of Junius" has been ascribed—Sir Philip Francis, and Recent Attempts to show from Handwriting his Identity with Junius—New Views as to the Junius Secret—The *Public Advertiser*—Mr. W. S. Woodfall—Mr. William Woodfall.

HAVING in the previous chapter referred to the Letters of Junius in the *Public Advertiser*, I must here pause for a few moments to make an observation or two in relation to the authorship of these remarkable productions. Though there is even now no absolute certainty as to the party from whose pen they proceeded, the opinion seems all but universal that they were written by Sir Philip Francis. Lord Macaulay, and Lord Brougham, have both, after a thorough investigation into the identity of Junius, recorded their deliberate conviction, that if Sir Philip Francis be not the author, then no faith is hereafter to be placed in circumstantial evidence. Yet there were, until lately, men of learning, who repudiated the notion—and I have no doubt there are still—that the letters of Junius were emanations from the pen of Sir Philip Francis. It was my good fortune to be personally acquainted with two of those who could



never listen with patience to the claims put forward to his authorship. One of these two literary men was Mr. John Galt, and the other Mr. William Cramp. Mr. Galt, author of "Laurie Tod," and many other novels, was in his day only second as a writer of works of fiction, to his illustrious contemporary, Sir Walter Scott. His firm belief was—and never did man believe in anything not absolutely certain more fully—that the authorship of the letters of Junius was to be ascribed to a Mr. Maclean, who had been a long time connected in India with the Government of that country, but returned to this country and lived and died in it, just at the time that would fit in with the publication of the Letters of Junius. Believing myself that Sir Philip Francis was their author, I will not restate the arguments which Mr. Galt made use of to me, only some months before he left London to go down to Greenock to die in his native town. The other literary gentleman who repudiated the idea of Sir Philip Francis being the author of the letters of Junius, was Mr. William Cramp. His name was never well known to fame, but he was a man of great and varied learning. He had devoted more than thirty years to an earnest and continuous investigation of the question, "Who was the Author of Junius?" and the conclusion at which he arrived was, that Lord Chesterfield was the man. So firmly was he persuaded that these brilliant letters were from Lord Chesterfield's pen, that I almost believe he would have gone to the stake, if there had

been a needs-be, in support of his belief. For several years Mr. Cramp was in the habit of coming to see me, and I never could get him to converse, for many minutes, on any other subject. Mr. Galt, as all the world knows, died upwards of thirty years ago, and Mr. Cramp closed his earthly existence seven or eight years since, as firmly believing as ever, that the arguments which he had, in many publications, and in one volume of considerable size, advanced in favour of the claims of Lord Chesterfield to the authorship of the letters of Junius, were, as Shakspeare said, in relation to another subject, "confirmation strong as proofs of holy writ."

Though I have only specially mentioned the names of Lord Chesterfield and Mr. Maclean as being believed by eminent literary men to have been Junius, there were no fewer than thirty-five parties, each of whose claims were zealously, and with more or less ability, advocated as being entitled to the distinction. Lord Chatham, Edmund Burke, Gibbon, author of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," Horace Walpole, Horne Tooke, and John Wilkes, were amongst those to whom the authorship of the Letters of Junius has been ascribed. But though few persons now believe that either of these well-known persons was Junius, I have good grounds for supposing that Lord Chatham had some hand in writing some parts of the letters. There are circumstances that have been known ever since Lady Francis, widow of Sir Philip Francis, wrote to the late Lord Campbell,

respecting the Letters of Junius, which amount to almost conclusive proof that Lord Chatham furnished information made use of in these letters, such as he alone could have given. It is partly on this account that Lord Campbell says, in his "Lives of the Lord Chancellors of England," that the evidence in favour of the identity of Junius with Sir Philip Francis is so strong that a jury of intelligent persons would pronounce a verdict in favour of Sir Philip.

Among those to whom the authorship of Junius has been ascribed, I am surprised to find the name of Edmund Burke, because he spoke of Junius in the House of Commons in a way in which he would not have ventured to do had he himself been Junius. In the year 1770, when the popularity of Junius was at its height, and when the indignation in Court and Government circles knew no bounds, because of the manner in which he assailed George III., Burke thus referred to Junius: "He made you,"—said that orator and statesman, addressing the members in their collective capacity—"he made you his quarry, and you still bleed from the wounds of his talons. You crouched, and still crouch beneath his rage." And then apostrophizing the Speaker of the House, he exclaimed, "Nor has he dreaded the terrors of your power, Sir. He has attacked even you. He has, and I believe you have no reason to triumph in the encounter. King, Lords, and Commons are but the sport of his fury." Burke, I repeat, would never have used such language, had the letters of Junius

been the emanations of his pen. He must have felt that it was at least within the pale of possibility, that though the identity of Junius was at the time shrouded in mystery, the shroud might be rent in twain, and the real Junius be revealed; and that therefore he must have been covered with confusion on its being found that he had thus been praising himself. Besides, if the style of the two writers be closely examined, it will be clearly seen that Burke and Junius could not be one and the same person.

Just while these lines were proceeding from my pen, a new work has been published by Mr. Murray, of Albemarle Street, which professes to have set the question of Junius's identity for ever at rest. The work is entitled "The Handwriting of Junius Professionally Investigated. By Mr. Charles Chabot, Expert. With Preface and Collateral Evidence by the Rev. Edward Twistleton." The basis on which the author of this volume chiefly rests his belief that Sir Philip Francis was the author of the Letters of Junius, is the similarity of the handwriting of Junius with that of Sir Philip. I repeat the expression of my own conviction that the authorship of those letters is to be attributed to the latter writer; but I cannot concur with the reviewer of the work alluded to in the *Quarterly Review* for April last, when he asserts that the question of the identity of Junius is for ever set at rest by it. Having this opinion, I think that the *Quarterly Review*, in its number for April, was rather rash when it pro-

nounced the evidence furnished by the work in question of the identity of Sir Philip Francis with Junius, to be positive demonstration. I regard that evidence to be confirmatory in a certain degree of what had been advanced before in support of the view that the Letters of Junius were written by Sir Philip Francis, but that is very different from demonstration. The *Times* and the *Athenæum* both take this view of the matter. I agree with them, that evidence which rests only or even chiefly on handwriting is comparatively seldom to be relied on. Even in this very case the evidence from handwriting appears to me to be, in parts, very feeble. For of the various instances adduced of the assumed sameness, or at least strong similarity between the penmanship of Junius and that of Sir Philip Francis, there are several which no one can examine without expressing his conviction that they bear very little, if any resemblance to each other. I will only allude to two such instances. They occur in relation to the words "newspaper" and "don't." The former word, as written by Junius, is in a comparatively small and contracted hand, whereas that of Sir Philip Francis is fine, open, and somewhat bold. The word "don't" as written by Junius, is still smaller, and more contracted than that of "newspaper," and looks much more like "do not" than "don't," whereas, as written by Sir Philip Francis, it is plain, open, and large. There is too, this other dissimilarity in these two words between the handwriting of Junius and Sir

Philip Francis,—that the penmanship of the former rather, if anything, leans to the right, whereas the handwriting of Sir Philip inclines in a very marked manner to the left.

But to show still more clearly that handwriting is not always to be trusted as evidence, even though we have the testimony of an expert like that of Mr. Charles Chabot in the case under consideration, I may mention that I have a somewhat rare book now before me, in which I have not mere signatures only, but somewhat lengthened extracts from letters written by five persons, assumed severally to be the author of the "Letters of Junius," and that each one of the handwritings of these parties bears a greater or less resemblance to the handwriting of Junius. The five gentlemen who, a hundred years ago, had each of their believers in the fact that the "Letters of Junius" proceeded from their respective pens, are Mr. Boyd, Mr. John Wilkes, Mr. Horne Tooke, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Ferrer. With these names there are five specimens of the penmanship of Junius, varying in length from five to twenty lines, and curiously enough, each one of these specimens of caligraphy very greatly differs from the others in appearance. Yet the handwriting of each one of the five parties who have been represented as the author of the "Letters of Junius," bears a marked resemblance to one or other of the specimens given us of the handwriting of Junius. I therefore repeat that I cannot concur with either the expert, Mr. Chabot, or the opinion of the *Quarterly*



*Review*, that the identity of Junius with Sir Philip Francis, is placed beyond all question by this "professional investigation" of the handwriting of Junius.

The wonder is as great to-day as it ever was, that the identity of Junius should never have been known as a fact of absolute certainty. I have expressed my own belief that Sir Philip Francis was the author of the "Letters of Junius." But it may somewhat tend to lessen the wonder that the original secret of the authorship of those Letters should never have transpired, although more than a century has passed away since they appeared before the public,—when I mention that in our own day, a secret somewhat similar was kept for many years, and might, as I shall show hereafter, have been kept still, and probably for ever, had not the party principally interested thought fit to take a few friends into his confidence. And here let me do them the justice to state that they have to a great extent proved themselves worthy of the confidence thus reposed in them. The matter to which I allude relates, like that of Junius, to letters published in a morning journal, which created at the time of their publication a profound and universal sensation. Many of the readers of this work will remember that immediately after the *coup d'état* of Louis Napoleon in December, 1851, a series of communications appeared in the *Morning Advertiser*, which was under my editorship at the time and for twenty years afterwards. They were signed "AN ENGLISHMAN." For the long period, with occasional brief intervals, of

nearly eight years, this series of articles continued to be published. They were allowed on all hands to surpass in brilliancy, power, and withering invective, anything which had appeared in any newspaper or other journal during the present century. In fact, the writer was everywhere spoken of as "a second Junius," as "a modern Junius," &c. As might have been expected, this series of papers appearing anonymously, the most intense curiosity was everywhere felt to ascertain who this extraordinary writer was. All sorts of conjectures were indulged in on the subject; and every one who had a theory as to the identity of "An Englishman," was as perfectly persuaded as he was of his own existence, that he had got hold of the real name of the author. Lord Russell—at that time Lord John Russell—would, if he had been in the habit of betting, have taken any odds that the letters emanated from the pen of a distinguished literary lady, of high position in society and literature; and certainly there was a great identity between her extreme political views and those of the "Englishman." With many people, it was a matter of faith, so firm as not to fall much short of absolute certainty, that Lord Brougham was the parent of the brilliant productions. Lord Brougham did write articles for the *Morning Advertiser* when under my editorship, but not those signed "An Englishman." But I need not enumerate the various parties to whom their paternity was ascribed. Their name very nearly approached, if it did not reach, legion. Suffice it to say

that there was hardly a member of either House of Parliament, having a reputation for eminent talents, who had not the honour of having the authorship of "The Englishman's" letters ascribed to him. I need scarcely say, that, it being assumed his identity must be known to me, I had applications from all quarters, and in not a few cases from high quarters, to reveal the authorship,—of course, "in the strictest confidence." My answer to all such applications was that, in the first instance, I did not know who the writer was; and in the second place, that if I did, I should feel it my duty to him, and an obligation which I owed to the journal whose interests were committed to my sole care and keeping, to preserve religiously the secret which had been confided to me. And not only so, but as I knew the writer was desirous that no one should be able to identify him, I did not even seek to gratify my own curiosity to ascertain who my brilliant contributor was.

I ought here to mention, that I am now in a position to state, ten years after the close of this remarkable series of papers—what I could not have stated during the eight years, or nearly so, in which their publication lasted,—that not one of the manifold guesses as to the authorship was successful, though each more confidently made than the other. Even after all these years have ended, the authorship of those letters of "An Englishman," which appeared in the *Morning Advertiser*, is as much a secret, except to a very few persons,—as much a mystery as was that

of the Letters of Junius in his lifetime. This, it will be admitted, is in some respects more surprising than that the secret of the identity of Junius should have been so well preserved; because, while the publication of the Letters of Junius extended over a period beginning with the 21st of January, 1769, and ending with the 21st of January, 1772,—a period of only three years, the publication of those of “An Englishman” extended, as before mentioned, over a period of not much less than eight years. And not only so, but while the letters of Junius from first to last, including those signed “Philo-Junius,” only numbered sixty-nine, those of “An Englishman”—though I cannot at the moment give their exact number—must have extended to from two hundred and fifty to three hundred; or from three to four times as many as the number of Junius’s Letters.

When I say that the Letters of Junius only amounted to sixty-nine in number, and that they were all published within the space of three years, I am aware that a greater number than that of letters from the pen of Junius appeared, including those contributed to other newspapers; and that altogether the publication of his letters extended over a period of four years and a half. But I am referring to the genuine edition of the “Letters of Junius,” published by Woodfall. If, then, the Letters of Junius extended over only a period of three years, and amounted in all only to sixty-nine, while the publication of those of “An Englishman” extended over a period of

nearly eight years, and must have numbered from two hundred and fifty to three hundred, and yet the authorship was never known to me as the editor of the morning journal in which "An Englishman's" contributions appeared, neither was it at the close of my contributor's communications,—is there not, in these facts, the strongest possible grounds for believing that Mr. Woodfall never was at all in the secret of the identity of Junius?

It may be, then, that Mr. Woodfall has for a full century received credit for preserving the secret of Junius's identity,—though a secret which he never possessed. That credit is not greater than merited, if he was actually in possession of the secret. I have, on the assumption that he was in its possession, joined heartily in the general commendation. But what if the fact should be that he has got all this credit for not divulging a secret which was never entrusted to him? It certainly is within the pale of possibility, perhaps of probability, that Mr. Woodfall knew no more of who "Junius" was than any of his readers. My own case in relation to the authorship of the letters of "An Englishman," is one which gives at least no small countenance to the theory that Mr. Woodfall did not know who Junius was. During the eight years that elapsed from the publication of the first to the last of his Letters, I must have received from two to three hundred *private* letters from the author, and written as many to him. An assumed name was given me for the purpose of secrecy; and the secrecy,

as I have said, was completely kept during the eight years that the letters of "An Englishman" were read with the deepest interest and unbounded admiration in all parts of the country. And if, I repeat, the identity of the author of these letters was all this time wholly unknown to me, might not Mr. Woodfall have lived and died without knowing who was the author of Junius?

In connexion with the name of Junius, that of Mr. W. S. Woodfall, printer and chief proprietor of the *Public Advertiser*, will go down to posterity. He is generally regarded as a mere printer, but he was more than that. He was a man of classical attainments. Nichols, in his "Literary Anecdotes," mentions the fact that when he was only five years of age he received half a crown from Pope as an expression of the latter's admiration of the fluent and correct manner in which the boy read to him a page of Homer in the Greek language. Pope had known young Woodfall's father while in the employment, as manager, of the printer who printed his works. At the early age of nineteen he had confided to him the printing and editing of the *Public Advertiser*, by the then proprietor of that newspaper. The *Public Advertiser*, like many other political journals of the eighteenth century, repeatedly underwent a change of title. It originally appeared in 1726 under the name of the *London Daily Post and General Advertiser*. In sixteen years afterwards it omitted the first part of the original title, simply calling itself



the *General Advertiser*. Again, in 1752, it underwent another change of title. That which it then adopted was the *Public Advertiser*, the title which it bore when the immortal letters of Junius appeared in it.

Soon after this the *Public Advertiser* became a very valuable property. It was held in shares in the names of Garrick and several others of the most eminent men of the day. I have seen statements representing the circulation as being so high as 20,000 copies per day; but I have no faith in the statement. My acquaintance with the circulation of daily newspapers about a hundred years ago, compels me to regard this reported circulation of the *Public Advertiser* as a great exaggeration of the facts of the case. Other writers on the newspaper press of the third quarter of the last century run to the other extreme, and represent it as being, at the period referred to, as low as 3500 copies per day. I have as little faith in this statement as in the other. My impression is that Dr. Johnson was much nearer the truth when he expressed his belief that from 6000 to 7000 was the number printed. That would have been a large and profitable circulation at the time; for the expenses of getting up a morning paper were not then a twentieth part of what they are now. But whatever were the profits of the *Public Advertiser* at the period of which I am speaking, they must have been great; for Nichols, in his "Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century," says that the property in

it was considered to be as permanent as a freehold estate. The same author adds—"Shares in it have been frequently sold by public auction as regularly as those of the New River Company." It is right, however, I should here state that subsequent writers have maintained, that in making this statement Nichols confounded the *Public Advertiser* with the *Daily Advertiser*, and that it was the latter journal which possessed the value ascribed to the former. It is not for me to decide between these conflicting statements.

But be the fact what it may, it is beyond all question that the "Letters of Junius" raised the circulation of the *Public Advertiser* very considerably, and materially increased the value of the property. It is true, indeed, that the increase was not great for some time after Junius had begun to publish those remarkable productions. The first that caused what might be called a sensation was the celebrated Letter to the King. There was a rush on the paper after that letter appeared, whenever any other contribution was found in its columns from the pen of Junius; while the regular daily circulation increased in a few weeks to the extent of 1750 copies a day; and by the end of the three years during which he continued to write, at intervals varying usually from one week to three weeks, the stated circulation of the *Public Advertiser* had increased by 3500 copies per day.

With regard to the circumstances attending its

ultimate extinction, there is, to my mind, some uncertainty. The author of "The Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century," whose information is seldom erroneous, says that the *Public Advertiser* received its death-blow from the appearance of the *Morning Advertiser*, of which the first number appeared on February 8th, 1794. Mr. Nichols, the author of that work, adds that the *Public Advertiser* lingered on for four years after that date, and then expired. In relation to this, it is right that I should mention that a somewhat different representation was verbally made to me many years ago as to the circumstances under which the *Public Advertiser* ceased to exist. My interlocutor was then proprietor of, at that time, the paper I have before referred to, called the *Guardian and Public Ledger*,—the latter title having existed for about sixty years, and the former having preceded it, as a new title, in the year 1832. The statement made to me by this gentleman was, that the *Public Advertiser* did not actually cease to exist at the time I have just stated; but that having come into the hands of new proprietors, it was amalgamated with the *Public Ledger*, which had, in the course of time, become his property; and that therefore his paper, the *Guardian and Public Ledger*, was actually the legitimate successor of the *Public Advertiser* of Junius. Whether my friend was right or wrong in his facts, I know he entirely believed in the truth of the statement he made to me; and, I may add, he was proud of his belief in the assumed

circumstance of his being the proprietor of the paper in which the Letters of Junius had originally appeared. One thing is certain, namely, that in the year 1793 the printing establishment of Mr. Woodfall took fire and was burnt to the ground. In seventeen or eighteen months afterwards the *Public Advertiser*, which was in a very low state at the time, in relation both to circulation and advertisements, was sold to new proprietors, and Mr. Woodfall then retired from business and purchased a house in Chelsea, where he resided during the remainder of his life. He died, greatly respected, in December, 1805. He was on terms of intimate friendship with many of the most eminent men of his day, among whom may be mentioned the names of Garrick, Colman, Smollett, and Goldsmith.

In connexion with the *Public Advertiser*, of which Mr. Woodfall was the chief proprietor and sole manager, I feel that this is the proper place in which to allude to one of his brothers, Mr. William Woodfall, who also occupied a prominent position in the newspaper press of the period in question, and who, while one of the most amiable of men, was in many respects one of the most remarkable persons of his day. He possessed for a time an unconquerable taste for the drama, and was one of the best dramatic critics of his time; but not satisfied with enjoying histrionic performances when others were the actors, he became an amateur performer himself, and in that capacity appeared on the stage in Edinburgh about the year

1772. However, he seems to have got tired of the stage in Scotland, and returned to London, where he resumed his literary pursuits. He accepted the office of editor of the *London Packet*,—a paper of which I have been unable to learn any particulars. How long Mr. William Woodfall occupied this post does not appear. It could not have been long, for we soon after find him filling the editorial chair of the *Morning Chronicle*, a paper which had been started at this time as a sort of rival, from commercial considerations, to the *Daily Advertiser*, the latter journal being at the time a very profitable property. In 1789 he resigned his connexion with the *Morning Chronicle*, and started a paper called the *Diary* on his own account. In his natural anxiety to insure the success of his new journal, he accomplished some very remarkable things,—things, it may be safely said, which had no previous parallel, nor have had any since that time. To great physical powers of endurance, and intellectual acquirements of no common kind, he united a memory almost incredible for its capacity of retention. On this account he was generally called “Memory Woodfall.” With the view of turning his rare, I might say, perhaps, unprecedented combination of qualities to account, he determined on what had never been done before in relation to reporting the proceedings in Parliament. It is true that something in the shape of reports of the speeches delivered in the Legislature had been given in some of the then daily journals, but they were the veriest outlines of

what had taken place, not being in extent a fourth part of the summaries of the debates now given in the *Times* and the other morning papers. Mr. William Woodfall determined to make an effort to supply the great desideratum then felt to exist of giving full reports of all the proceedings both in the House of Lords and the House of Commons. So marvellously retentive was his recollection, that he has been known to write sixteen columns of speeches without having taken a single note to assist his memory. Not less extraordinary were his physical capabilities, for it is a well attested fact that he had been known to sit from ten to twelve hours writing from memory the speeches to which he had listened, in a heated atmosphere, the previous sixteen hours. But though these unparalleled—they were considered at the time supernatural—efforts gained him a high reputation, and were everywhere the themes of wonder as well as of praise, a division of labour in the duty of reporting was introduced by Mr. Perry of the *Morning Chronicle*, and a number of short-hand writers were appointed to do the work. The *Diary* then began to fall off in circulation, until it became a losing concern, and consequently was discontinued. I cannot give the exact length of time it lasted, but from incidental observations I have met with in relation to it, I think it must have been four or five years. Mr. William Woodfall was an intimate friend of Garrick, Goldsmith, Savage, and other eminent men in the earlier and more brilliant part of his career. Though the almost supernatural



work, both mental and physical, which he went through, enfeebled his naturally excellent constitution, he lived till August 1, 1803, and visited the House of Lords so recently as the 27th of the previous month. On his death, the contemporary Newspaper Press unanimously concurred in paying the warmest tributes to his memory.

## CHAPTER VIII.

FROM 1770 TILL 1785.

Dramatic Criticism—Samuel Foote, the Dramatist and Comedian—His Hostility to Newspaper Editors and the Newspaper Press—His Correspondence with the Duchess of Kingston—His Ridicule of the Head-dresses of the Ladies—Edmund Burke—Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

It will be new to most of my readers when I mention that, notwithstanding the number of dramatic authors, and literary gentlemen generally, who before the year 1770 had been connected with the Newspaper Press, theatrical criticism should have been, until then, a thing unknown. Yet so it was. Previous to that time, instead of sending a competent theatrical critic to the various leading histrionic houses, such as Drury Lane and Covent Garden, to give continuous and detailed notices of new dramatic productions, the proprietors of newspapers contented themselves with such notices of novelties as the lessees of the theatres thought fit to send them. Nor was this all. Newspaper editors even paid for the meagre and miserable notices sent by the managers of theatres. And not only so, but, for reasons which I am unable to comprehend, when an alteration in this state of things took place, and duly qualified parties were sent to

notice the introduction of new plays, the dramatists of the day showed an implacable hostility to the new theatrical criticism. Foremost among the number, and worse than any one else, was Samuel Foote, at that time the most popular dramatist in the department of comedy. Nothing could exceed the abuse and bitterness with which he wrote, in his dramas, of the newspaper press of that day. Bad as Ben Jonson was, Foote was still worse. There was in his vituperation something resembling the very quintessence of malignity. Anything, too, more outrageously absurd than his character of contemporary journalism could not be imagined. It was so gross an exaggeration throughout, that it completely defeated itself. Instead of the readers laughing at the newspaper press, their laughter, mingled with pity, was directed towards the author, at seeing a popular dramatist, as well as first-rate comedian, putting his name to a production unmatched for the extravagance of its caricature.

In his drama entitled "The Bankrupt," he introduces two characters, one of whom is *Mr. Margin*, intended to represent the editors of newspapers, or printers, as they still continued to be called; while the other, *Sir Robert Discounter*, was a fit representative of Mr. Foote himself. *Sir Robert*, in other words, the author of the drama, gets into a collision with *Mr. Margin*, the editor, and among other coarse and rancorous epithets which he addresses to the editor, we find the following:—"Impudent rascally

printers,"—otherwise editors; "These pests, who point their poisoned arrows against the peace of mankind;" "A pack of factious, infamous scoundrels;" "Miscreants;" "This mongrel, squatting upon his joint stool, by a single line proscribes and ruins your reputation at once;" "The tyranny exercised by that fellow, and those of his tribe, is more despotic and galling than the most absolute monarch in Asia."

It will ever be a blot on the memory of Foote that he, a gentleman alike by birth and early breeding, could have so far indulged his inveterate hostility to the Newspaper Press as to have recourse to the use of such language,—of which, let me add, many such specimens, equally coarse and virulent, might be given. The extraordinary animosity with which Foote regarded the Newspaper Press of his day, and the coarseness of his abuse of it, have been to most people inexplicable, because the journals of his time—at least as a class—were not only not in the habit of assailing him, but on the contrary, treating him with every respect. I imagine that the true cause of his rancour was to be found in an incidental allusion made by him in one of his letters to the then disreputable Duchess of Kingston. This was on one of the most extraordinary correspondences which ever took place between a gentleman and a lady. Foote had written a piece for the theatres entitled "The Trip to Calais," regarding which the Duchess of Kingston had obtained some information to the effect, that she was held up to

ridicule under the designation of *Lady Kitty Crocodile*. The necessary license from the Lord Chamberlain to perform the piece was withheld, and consequently it could not be brought out. On this, after writing to the Lord Chamberlain ineffectually imploring him to reconsider his resolution and to grant the requisite permission to perform the piece, adding that if his lordship persisted in withholding a license, it would be his (Mr. Foote's) inevitable ruin, as he would "never be able to muster courage enough to face follies again,"—he wrote to the Duchess herself a letter, in which the following expressions occur:—"I really, Madam, wish you no ill, and should be sorry to do you an injury. I therefore give up to that consideration what neither your Grace's offers nor the threats of your agents could obtain. The scenes shall not be published, nor shall anything appear at my theatre, or from me, that can hurt you, provided *the attacks made on me in the newspapers* do not make it necessary for me to act in self-defence."

I have put Foote's reference to the attacks made on him by the newspapers in italics, believing that that may throw some light on the ferocity with which he assailed the journals of his day. The explanation of his thus making his future conduct towards the Duchess of Kingston, in a measure contingent on his being afterwards attacked or not by the newspapers, may be given in a few words. Her chief, if not sole adviser, at this period of her life, was a Rev. Dr. Jackson; and the universal belief was

that there was between them an improper intimacy. Now he was, in 1775, when the correspondence took place between the Duchess and Foote, part proprietor of the *Public Ledger*, and was in the habit of severely attacking Foote in that journal. But surely the abuse heaped on Foote by one pen, in one journal, was no justification of his conduct in so grossly vituperating and rancorously assailing the whole Newspaper Press of his day.

It may be a slight digression, but it is necessary to give a few lines from the answer to that part of the letter which I have quoted:—

“I know too well,” says the Duchess, “what is due to my own dignity to enter into a compromise with an extortionable assassin of private reputation. If I before abhorred you for your slander, I now despise you for your concessions; it is a proof of the illiberality of your satire, when you can publish or suppress it as best suits the needy convenience of your purse. You first had the cowardly baseness to draw the sword, and if I sheath it until I make you crouch like the subservient vassal as you are, then is there not spirit in an injured woman, nor meanness in a slanderous buffoon.

“To a man my sex alone would have screened me from attack; but I am writing to the descendant of a merryandrew, and prostitute the term of manhood, by applying it to Mr. Foote.

“Clothed in my innocence as in a coat of mail, I



am proof against an host of foes; and, conscious of never having intentionally offended a single individual, I doubt not but a brave and generous public will protect me from the malevolence of a theatrical assassin. You shall have cause to remember that, though I would have given liberally for the relief of your necessities, I scorn to be bullied into a purchase of your silence.

“There is something, however, in your pity at which my nature revolts. To make me an offer of pity at once betrays your insolence and your vanity. I will keep the pity you send until the morning before you are turned off, when I will return it by a cupid with a box of lip-salve, and a choir of choristers shall chaunt a stave to your requiem.”

Mr. Foote's rejoinder was pointed, pungent, and personal in the highest degree. He indignantly denies that he ever in any way, or at any time, “begged relief from her charity.” On the contrary, he emphatically asserts that he had rejected the “splendid offer” which the Duchess made to him to suppress the “Trip to Calais;” but it afterwards appeared that so far from her having made any offer of money for the suppression of the piece, Foote did actually propose to her to suppress it, on the condition that she should give him 2000*l.* for doing so. The Rev. John Forster, a clergyman of high character, who was cognizant of the facts of the case, made an affidavit before Sir John Fielding, in his capacity of a Middlesex magistrate, to the effect

that the offer *was* made to the Duchess through him.

In speaking of Foote, let us give him credit for one good act which he did in his histrionic capacity. All the ridicule which Addison and Steele, and other writers of the day, directed against the monstrosities of ladies' head-dresses, appears to have had but little, if any effect, for we find frequent allusions made to them, both in books and newspapers, for half a century afterwards. After, indeed, the lapse of that long period, the head-dresses of ladies of fashion seem to have acquired more colossal and more hideous proportions than ever, for in 1776 Mr. Foote appeared at the Haymarket Theatre, in the character of *Lady Pentweazle*, to ridicule from the stage the monstrous absurdity of these head-dresses. The head-dress which Mr. Foote wore on the occasion, as *Lady Pentweazle*, is described in the newspapers of the day as "having been stuck full of feathers of an extravagant size: it extended a yard wide, and the whole frame of feathers, hair, and wool dropped off his head as he left the stage. King George and Queen Charlotte, who were present, laughed heartily at the exhibition, and Her Majesty, wearing an elegant and becoming head-dress, supplied a very fitting rebuke to the absurdity which the actor had thus satirized."

It was believed that the presence on this occasion, of the Queen of George III., at a piece got up for the purpose of holding up to ridicule the head-dress monstrosities, — her own head-dress being of the

simplest and most quiet kind—had more to do with causing them to be discarded for some time afterwards, than all the newspaper diatribes which were directed against them. But a tragical event which took place in Bath, at the same time, in connexion with head-dresses, also contributed in no small degree to the disuse of such head-dresses. The head-dress of a young unmarried lady at a ball in Bath took fire, and though the result was not fatal it was of a painfully disastrous kind, and caused a great sensation in all fashionable circles throughout the country.

An allusion to this incident is made in the following poetical description of the head-dresses of the ladies of a century ago:—

A cap like a hat  
(Which was once a cravat),  
Part gracefully plaited and pin'd is,  
Part stuck upon gauze,  
Resembles macaws,  
And all the fine birds of the Indies.

But above all the rest,  
A bold Amazon's crest  
Waves nodding from shoulder to shoulder,  
At once to surprise  
And to ravish all eyes,  
To frighten and charm the beholder.

In short, head and feather,  
And wig altogether,  
With wonder and joy would delight ye;  
Like the picture I've seen  
Of the adorable queen  
Of the beautiful, bless'd Otaheite.

Yet Miss at the Rooms  
 Must beware of her plumes,  
 For if Vulcan her feather embraces,  
 Like poor Lady Laycock,  
 She'd burn like a haycock,  
 And roast all the Loves and the Graces.

This effusion appeared in a Bath journal of that day, and showed that the provincial papers joined with those of London in seeking to ridicule out of existence the prevalent burlesque head-dresses of the ladies.

About this time the Newspaper Press had to boast of another great accession to the ranks of its writers in the person of the illustrious orator and statesman, Edmund Burke. I cannot learn the exact time at which he made his *début* as a regular contributor to the political journalism of his day; but I know that the paper for which he first became a writer was the *Englishman*,—a weekly journal of no small reputation, and a somewhat large circulation, and which continued to be published, after many vicissitudes, till the year 1834, by which time its circulation had dwindled down to a few hundreds, and its *prestige* had entirely gone. In fact, it had for several years been what is called in newspaper phraseology “made up” out of the *Morning Chronicle*, it having come into the hands of Mr. William Clement, then the proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Observer*, and the sporting paper, *Bell's Life in London*. Burke's contributions to the *Englishman* were chiefly of a satirical kind. They furnished evidence of that power

of sarcasm and invective which he showed at a later period of his life, both in Parliament and in his published works. Some few years afterwards Burke, with his two brothers, became stated writers for the *London Evening Post*. Edmund Burke did not write so largely as his two brothers, except at the commencement of the American War, when he was a liberal and able contributor. Few men of any note have made greater professions of attachment to the cause of the freedom of the Press; and yet there was no man who was disposed to make less allowance for it, when it freely and fearlessly dealt with himself. As a proof of this, he brought, in 1784, an action for libel against Mr. Woodfall, the printer of the *Public Advertiser*, the paper in which all the letters of Junius appeared, and in the columns of which he had been allowed by Mr. Woodfall to reply to, and somewhat severely handle Junius. He laid the damages at 5000*l.*, and only got 100*l.*—a conclusive proof that the jury at least before whom the case was tried did not think the libel was of any very serious kind,—not, certainly, of the aggravated nature which he had represented it to be when he claimed damages to the amount of 5000*l.*

It is here deserving of remark, as a somewhat curious, as well as regrettable fact, that it has been in our past history a characteristic of those who have most vehemently protested their friendship for the freedom of the press, that they have been the readiest to resort to the rigours of the law of libel when their

own conduct has been arraigned in the public journals. I need not specify instances of this. I will only mention one, namely, an action brought in 1785, by Lord Chatham against Mr. Woodfall, printer of the *Public Advertiser*; but in that action the public prosecutor was defeated by a technical defect in the proceedings. Pitt, the son of Lord Chatham, could hardly be considered a zealous friend of the freedom of the press; but it certainly was anomalous in a man of his character and position in the State, to bring an action against the printer of the *Public Advertiser* for a libel, and lay the damages at 10,000*l.*, when the jury only awarded him 150*l.*

We have seen in our previous history of the Newspaper Press how many men either distinguished in literature, at the time, or who afterwards became so, were more or less intimately connected with one or more of the newspapers of their day. In the year 1782, Mr. Richard Brinsley Sheridan added one more to the number. In conjunction with some others whose names have not transpired, he started a weekly paper, called the *Jesuit*. The inference from that title, if it had been viewed as adopted in good faith, would have been that the new journal was to be devoted to the advocacy of Roman Catholicism, as embraced by the Jesuits and embodied in their acts. But the very reverse was meant to be the policy of the *Jesuit* to what its title indicated. And this was not an uncommon resource of the journalists of the eighteenth century. We have seen that Smollett



resorted to that course by becoming the editor of the *Jacobite Journal*; though so far from entertaining Jacobite principles he abhorred them, and started the journal in question, for the express purpose of denouncing them. In like manner, the object which Mr. Brinsley Sheridan had in view in starting, in conjunction with others, the *Jesuit*, was to hold up to scorn and ridicule the short-lived, ultra-Tory Administration of Lord Shelburne, and to advocate extremely liberal views alike in politics and religion. The government of Lord Shelburne, and Lord Shelburne himself personally, were so persistently and fiercely assailed in the columns of the *Jesuit*, principally, it is probable, by the pen of Mr. Brinsley Sheridan,—that an action for libel was brought, ere many months had elapsed, against the printer of the paper. But before the Attorney-General could bring the action before the courts of law, the Shelburne Ministry were defeated in the House of Commons on the important question of the Peace of Versailles; and consequently, were compelled to resign. But now came a circumstance which cannot be contemplated except with pain and shame, because of the illustration it affords of the badness of human nature. The party which the *Jesuit* had so zealously supported, and which it had materially assisted to overthrow the Shelburne Administration, succeeded the latter in power; yet, will it be believed, they, with Charles James Fox, Foreign Secretary, and Brinsley Sheridan filling the important office of Secretary to the Treasury, allowed

this prosecution against the printer of the *Jesuit*, who had nothing to do with the writing of the incriminated article, to proceed. The result was, that the printer was convicted, and sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment, which he had to suffer without sympathy or notice of any kind from Sheridan, or his party, now in the plenitude of political power. We hear much of political ingratitude, just as all of us have more or less frequently experienced personal ingratitude, but I could not conceive of grosser ingratitude of the former kind than this. Sheridan's life throughout was marked by much that was selfish, ungenerous, ungrateful, and unprincipled; but, all circumstances considered, I know of nothing more unworthy than the way in which he acted to the printer of the *Jesuit*.

## CHAPTER IX.

### FROM 1785 TO THE CLOSE OF THE CENTURY.

Cowper and Crabbe on the Newspaper Press of their Day—Increase of Taxes on Newspapers—Prevalence of Press Prosecutions in the Reign of George the Third—Beneficial Effects of the Remission of Taxes on the Newspapers—Court Sports and Amusements at the end of the Century—Concluding Remarks.

WE have now descended along the stream of newspaper history to a period which may be regarded as a landmark in the annals of weekly, twice a week, three times a week, and daily journalism. Compared with the meagre things which newspapers were towards the close of the previous century, they had by this time become respectable in appearance and information. Still, so late as 1788 there was nothing in them,—not even in the *Times* itself, which then commenced its ultimately brilliant career, to which I will advert at length in a subsequent part of my work,—nothing professing to resemble the quality of the matter which is to be found in the daily journals of the beginning of the present century, much less the leading articles of the second half of the century. There had been abridged reports of the proceedings in Parliament, and so great an amount of general intelligence, that the newspaper now became a sort of /

conventional necessity to every person of intelligence or social position in the land. The aggregate circulation of the newspapers of the day, which had then risen as high, it may safely be affirmed, as 13,000,000 copies annually, as we know from subsequent stamp returns,—was rapidly extending.

The interest taken in the newspapers of that time by the community, and the influence which they exercised on the public mind, may be inferred from the fact that two of the most popular poets of the period gave them a prominent place in their pages. Cowper and Crabbe in a sense vied with each other in giving importance to the Newspaper Press of that era in our history. It was between the years 1780 and 1785 that Cowper, in his poem of “The Task,” thus sang of the newspapers of his day:—

The folio of four pages, happy work,  
 Which not even critics criticise, that holds  
 Inquisitive attention while I read  
 Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,  
 Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break.  
 What is it but a map of busy life,  
 Its fluctuations and its vast concerns?  
 Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge  
 That tempts ambition. On the summit, see  
 The seals of office glitter in his eyes;  
 He climbs, he pants, he grasps them. At his heels,  
 Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,  
 And with a dexterous jerk soon twists him down,  
 And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.  
 Here rills of oily eloquence in soft  
 Meanders lubricate the course they take;  
 The modest speaker is ashamed and grieved

To engross a moment's notice, and yet begs,  
Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,  
However trivial all that he conceives.  
Sweet bashfulness! it claims at least this praise,  
The dearth of information and good sense  
That it foretells us, always comes to pass.  
Cataracts of declamation thunder here;  
There forests of no meaning spread the page,  
In which all comprehension wanders lost;  
While fields of pleasantry amuse us there,  
With merry descants on a nation's woes.  
The rest appears a wilderness of strange  
But gay confusion: roses for the cheeks,  
And lilies for the brows of faded age;  
Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,  
Heaven, earth, and ocean plunder'd of their sweets,  
Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,  
Sermons and city feasts, and favourite airs,  
Ætherial journeys, submarine exploits,  
And Katterfelto with his hair on end  
At his own wonders, wondering for his bread.

Along with Cowper's natural tendency to satire, which we discern in several parts of this extract, there is much of graphic description of the contents of a newspaper nearly ninety years ago. Even so far back as that, after making all allowances for the proverbial license for which poets have to draw largely on their imagination, we find that newspapers embraced a great variety of matter. But when we say this, the mind cannot help reflecting on the immeasurably greater abundance of materials for description which the poet of Olney would have had, either had he lived in our day, or had the newspaper of 1871 been what it was at the time when he wrote his "Task."

In either case, instead of a page or two being devoted to the Newspaper, we should have had a "Task" appropriated wholly to itself, and occupying a goodly volume.

Crabbe, too, described with great gusto, as if his heart had been in his theme, the newspaper journalism of his day. I subjoin a few detached extracts. He gives his poem, which was published in 1785, the title of

#### THE NEWSPAPER.

I sing of news, and all those vapid sheets  
 The rattling hawker vends through gaping streets;  
 Whate'er their name, whate'er the time they fly,  
 Damp from the press, to charm the reader's eye;  
 For, soon as morning dawns with roseate hue,  
 The herald of the morn arises too;  
*Post* after *Post* succeeds, and all day long  
*Gazettes* and *Ledgers* swarm, a noisy throng.

\* \* \* \* \*

When evening comes, she comes with all her train  
 Of *Ledgers*, *Chronicles*, and *Posts* again,  
 Like bats appearing, when the sun goes down,  
 From holes obscure, and corners of the town.  
 Of all these trifles, all like these, I write;  
 Oh! like my subject could my song delight,  
 The crowd at Lloyd's one poet's name should raise,  
 And all the Alley echo to his praise.  
 A time like this, a busy, bustling time,  
 Suits ill with writers, very ill with rhyme;  
 Unheard we sing, when party rage runs strong,  
 And mightier madness checks the flowing song.  
 Sing, drooping muse, the cause of thy decline,  
 Why reign no more the once triumphant nine?  
 Alas! new charms the wavering many gain,  
 And rival sheets the reader's eye detain:



A daily swarm, that banish every muse,  
Come flying forth, and mortals call them news;  
For these, unread the noblest volumes lie,  
For these, in sheets unsoiled the muses die;  
Unbought, unblest, the virgin copies wait  
In vain for fame, and sink, unseen, to fate.

\* \* \* \* \*

Since then the town forsakes us for our foes,  
The smoothest numbers for the harshest prose!  
Let us, with generous scorn the taste deride,  
And sing our rivals with a rival's pride.

If two such poets as Cowper and Crabbe could thus expatiate on the qualities of the tiny publications called newspapers of their day, with what wonder and admiration, were it possible they could revisit our world, would they look on, and in what exalted strains would they sing the praises of the *Times*, and other morning journals of 1871!

No one acquainted with newspaper history can read the above quotations from Cowper and Crabbe with other than pleasurable emotions. It is true, that the latter indulges in subdued sarcasms at some of the contents of newspapers, but these are harmless, while he dwells on the interest attaching to that class of journalism. They contrast strongly with the diatribes which Ben Jonson, Fletcher, and others of the seventeenth century, and Samuel Foote, Shirley, and other dramatists of the eighteenth century, directed against the newspapers of the respective periods in which they lived.

The period of which I am at present speaking was

that of the reign of George III. Probably in no previous, and certainly in no subsequent reign of any of our English Sovereigns, was the Newspaper Press more despotically dealt with by the successive governments during the third of the Georgian reigns. In the time of the two Charleses, more severe persecutions of the Press may have taken place at the personal instigation or in compliance with the personal wishes of the monarch ; but when speaking of the government of George III.—not of himself personally—I feel assured my statement is correct when I say, that in the history of England no instance can be adduced in which the Newspaper Press was so tyrannically treated as it was during the successive Administrations of George III. In our day, when a Government prosecution of the Press is a thing unknown, we can hardly realize the fact of the extent to which the political journalism of the Third George's reign was relentlessly prosecuted. No newspaper indeed was, in a single one of its publications, safe. Anything and everything which an editor or contributor wrote, provided it related to political matters, was quite at the mercy of the Attorney-General ; and it was with the perpetual fear of that functionary before their eyes that every number of the Liberal or independent papers was issued from the press. I believe I am speaking in accordance with the fact when I say, that there was no bold, independent editor of a newspaper of any note, who did not suffer imprisonment as well as fine for his honesty and courage, during the reign

of George III., while a number of them had a painful personal experience of what the pillory was.

We Editors of the present day hardly appreciate to the extent we ought to do, our entire immunity from Government prosecutions of the Press.

Commercially, too, the Newspaper Press, during the reign of the third of the Georges, had to complain of the injury done to it at the instance of the governments of that reign. At the beginning of the reign the tax on newspapers was a penny; but in 1765 it was raised to three-halfpence. In 1789 the duty was increased to twopence. In 1797 another halfpenny was laid on, making it twopence-halfpenny. In seven years afterwards another penny was added, making it threepence-halfpenny; and in 1815 it was raised to fourpence, less a discount of twenty per cent. for ready money. But the twenty per cent. discount for ready money was a fiction, no credit ever having been given by Government to the Press when ordering their stamps. Contemporaneously with these additional taxes on papers, there was of necessity a corresponding increase in their price, until the general price reached sevenpence, which lasted until the reduction of the stamp duty to one penny,—of which reduction, with the circumstances under which it took place, I shall have to speak hereafter.

In the meantime I wish to say in the most emphatic terms, that the public of the present day cannot, any more than the proprietors and editors of the Newspaper Press, be sufficiently thankful for the

happy change which, since the death of George III. has come over the spirit of the intervening Governments in relation to our political journalism. Had the state of things which then existed been prolonged until now, we should not have seen that marvellous improvement in our newspapers, either materially or mentally, which we have witnessed for the last thirty years. Our political journals are the admiration of the civilized portion of mankind. In the times of George III. much of the profits of journalism had to be spent in defending actions for alleged libels, and in paying the heavy penalties which were usually imposed on the newspaper proprietor as the result of the proceedings instituted against him. While the frequent occurrence of these prosecutions held out no inducement to invest more capital in enlarging the size, or improving the appearance of their journals, or of increasing the talent employed in them, they had the effect of deterring other men of spirit, and of necessary means, from embarking in new journalistic enterprises. But since all restrictions have been abolished, and every one is at liberty, so far as Government is concerned, to employ his capital in it, without being subject to any fiscal or political fetters whatever, a powerful impulse has been given to newspaper improvement in all its varied phases, which renders the present political journalism of Great Britain the wonder of the world.

It was one of the standard arguments against the abolition of the taxes on newspapers that the inevi-

table result would be the introduction to our political journalism of a class of papers which would be devoted to the advocacy of an ultra democracy, wholly incompatible with the existence of constitutional government; while licentiousness in its very worst form would be habitually promoted. Many intelligent as well as good men were filled with such apprehensions as these; but the event has shown that their fears were wholly groundless. There never was a period in the history of our country in which the Newspaper Press was, viewed as a whole, more largely characterized by the constitutional spirit by which it is actuated, or the tone of morality by which it is uniformly pervaded. No greater good, indeed, was ever conferred on the British Empire than that which it received when those taxes on the Press were removed, which for so long a period pressed upon it with a weight so heavy as wellnigh to crush it entirely.

Ever since the imposition of the first tax, in the time of the *Tatlers* and *Spectators*, when a stamp was put on newspapers, down till the period at which this chapter commences, it had on various occasions been raised and reduced; and the prices of the journals varied accordingly. While the stamp some time previous to this remained at the penny to which it had been reduced in 1761, the price of one or two of the papers was only twopence-halfpenny; but the general price was threepence. On Lord North raising in 1775 the duty to three halfpence, a corresponding

rise took place in the price of the papers. When in 1789 another addition of a halfpenny was made to the stamp duty, the price at which the generality of the papers were sold was increased to fourpence. In 1797 another addition of three halfpence was made to the newspaper tax, chiefly from considerations connected with the revenue; and the consequent increase which took place in the price of the papers was relatively greater, being twopence more, making the price of the generality of the papers sixpence. The stamp duty, and the price of the majority of papers continued at these rates until the year 1815. As the duty was then increased to fourpence, with a discount of twenty per cent.; the general price of the political journals was raised to sevenpence. But to this last increase in the duty and price of the newspapers, I shall have occasion to recur in a subsequent chapter.

I have devoted considerable space in previous chapters to incidental references to the manners of the people during the eighteenth century. I have also made allusions to the conduct and customs of the higher orders of society. I cannot more fittingly conclude this chapter, and close my observations on the then prevailing customs, than by adverting for a few moments to the sports and amusements which at the end of the century were common at the Court of George III.

And on reading an account of the royal sports and amusements at the end of the eighteenth century, no



one can help exclaiming, What a strangely altered taste there is in all classes of society, in the present time, compared with that at the close of the last, or the commencement of the current century!

Instances of this have been before alluded to in the previous pages of this work; but there is one curious instance which I have not given in relation to the manner in which the Court, seventy years ago, celebrated royal birthday anniversaries. While George III. was staying, in 1798, at Weymouth—which, as is generally known, was his favourite watering-place—the anniversary of the birthday of the Duchess of Wurtemberg occurred, and the Court of St. James's, desirous of celebrating the event in a way which it was thought would be most complimentary and gratifying to her German Grace, resolved on adopting the following programme, which Dr. Andrew Wynter gives in his work, "Subtle Brains and Lissom Fingers," as having been exhumed by him from the *Times* newspaper of October 3rd, 1798. The sports, I ought to mention, took place at Maiden Castle, near Dorchester, as being the most suitable place in the county for the purpose:—

To be played for at Cricket, a round of beef,—each man of the winning set to have a ribband.

A cheese to be rolled down the hill,—prize to whoever stops it.

A silver cup to be run for by ponies,—the best of three heats.

A pound of tobacco to be grinned for.

A barrel of beer to be rolled down the hill—a prize to whoever stops it.

A Michaelmas goose to be dived for.

A good hat to be cudgelled for.

Half a guinea for the best ass in three heats.

A handsome hat for the boy most expert in catching a roll dipped in treacle and suspended by a string.

A leg of mutton and a gallon of porter to the winner of a race of 100 yards in sacks.

A good hat to be wrestled for.

Half a guinea to the rider of an ass who wins the best of three heats by coming in last.

A pig, prize to whoever catches him by the tail.

And this was the way in which, seventy years ago, the anniversary birthdays of foreign Princesses and Duchesses on a visit to the Court of George III., were celebrated. One cannot help wondering, what would be thought if, in 1871, Queen Victoria should give her sanction to a similar programme for any of the great birthday fêtes at which the ladies of her Court would be expected to be present, attired in their most brilliant toilettes. Customs, it thus appears, change with the lapse of time, at Courts as well as in cottages,—among princes and princesses as well as among peasants and paupers.

From this period till the close of the century there is little of interest to record. Whatever there is, will be found under the titles of the various daily journals, which started in the interval, and which will be noticed in subsequent chapters. The intervening years were characterized by a number of prosecutions for alleged libel, but they were not so

numerous as in any previous interval of the same length during the century. This may be partly accounted for from the fact that both governments and men in high social positions began to view the Newspaper Press with somewhat greater favour than formerly ; but the chief cause of the reduction in the number of actions for libel, was the passing of a Bill, introduced into the House of Commons by Charles James Fox, for investing juries with the right to decide, in actions against the Newspaper Press for alleged libels, both as to the character of the alleged libels, and the fact of publication. This measure received the sanction of the Legislature in 1792.

In looking back on the leading newspaper writers of the eighteenth century it is worthy of mention that nearly all of them, in addition to their avowed contributions, wrote under some fictitious name. Sir Richard Steele wrote many papers in the *Tatler* under the signature of "Isaac Bickersteth." Addison concealed for a considerable time his real name in the *Spectator*, under that of "Clio,"—not giving all the word at once, but taking the letters one at a time, in rotation. Henry Fielding employed various names or phrases under which he wrote. In the *Jacobite Journal* his favourite one was "John Trottplaid," while all the contributions to the *Champion* newspaper which appeared under the sobriquet of "Captain Hercules Vinegar," were from his pen. In the *Covent Garden Journal*, of which he was, during a part of its brief existence, editor, his favourite *nom de guerre* was "Sir

Alexander Drawcansir." The story of the Junius Letters is too well known to require that a reference should be made to it. Whoever may have been the author of these Letters, this one thing is certain—namely, that his real name was not Junius. John Horne Tooke was a liberal contributor to the *Public Advertiser*,—the paper in which the Letters of Junius appeared—under the signature of "A Freeholder of Surrey," while the same writer contributed somewhat largely to the same journal under the phrase "Strike but Hear." The unfortunate Thomas Chatterton wrote various articles, about this time, for the *Middlesex Journal*, under the cognomen of "Decimus." At a somewhat later date, Mr. J. Mackintosh, afterwards Sir James Mackintosh, sent a number of communications to the *Morning Chronicle* pretending they had come from "The Ghost of Vandegrab." But no information was furnished to the readers of the *Morning Chronicle* of that day as to who the "Vandegrab" was, whose "Ghost" was thus from time to time, making its appearance in the columns of that journal.

## CHAPTER X.

### COMMENCEMENT OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Moral Character of the Newspaper Press in the beginning of the Present Century—Its Intellectual Character—Its Political Character—Its Leading Features—Specimens from various Journals—Difference between the Newspapers of that Day and Ours.

As we have now reached the close of the eighteenth, and the commencement of the nineteenth century, this will be a fit occasion for pausing for a brief space, in order that we may glance at the character, morally, intellectually, politically, and materially, of the morning journalism of that period.

In regard to the matter of morality, none of the morning papers at the end of the last, and the beginning of the present century, could be compared with the existing newspaper journalism of the metropolis. Though there was nothing absolutely gross in any of the articles which appeared either in the morning or evening papers of seventy years ago, yet there was much of what might be called an "insinuated" impropriety, to which no existing morning or evening journal would venture to give insertion. Much appeared in the journalism of those times which no lady of delicate mind would read aloud, and which no gentleman, however gay he might be,

would dare to read in the hearing of a lady. To respectable persons of the present generation it must be a subject of surprise that those of the papers of that period that were most noted for indelicate allusions and ideas, should have been received into families at all. Probably the morning paper that dealt the most largely in this style of writing was the *Oracle*, which was the property of Mr. Peter Stuart, brother of Daniel Stuart, at that time proprietor both of the *Morning Post* and the *Courier*. Yet notwithstanding its low tone of propriety, indeed I might say morality, it had a considerable circulation, and enrolled among its regular writers the name of Mr. Mackintosh, afterwards Sir James Mackintosh.

So far as the intellectualism of the daily metropolitan journalism of the beginning of the present century is concerned, there was not, in the leading article department, anything deserving the name. The papers of that period were little better in that respect than they were a century and a half before. The journalism of seventy years ago was not, however, devoid of intellectual writing, though none was to be found in the leading article department,—the department in which chiefly we now look for it, and are never disappointed. Whatever there was in the morning papers of 1799—1801 of an intellectual character, or displaying writing capabilities of any kind, was to be found in the form of letters or of communications avowedly from correspondents.

With regard to the political character of the metro-



politan daily papers of three score and ten years ago, the tone which the majority of them took was that of Liberalism. The *Times*, the *Morning Post*, the *Morning Chronicle*, and the *Morning Advertiser*, were all, more or less, the advocates of what are called "popular principles;" while the *Morning Herald*, if it could not, strictly speaking, be called "Liberal," was certainly not committed deeply to Toryism. But though four out of the five then existing morning journals identified themselves with the cause of progress, they rendered no assistance to the popular cause in the form of leading articles. It was only by inserting in their columns intelligence calculated to promote Liberal principles, and receiving letters and other communications from contributors, that they rendered any service to the cause with which they had identified themselves. Hence, as I have before remarked, I never fail to feel surprise how the journalism of the end of the last century, and the beginning of the present, should have exercised any appreciable influence on the public mind; yet it does seem to have done so. It is matter of newspaper history that Mr. James Perry, proprietor and editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, though the circulation of that journal was at this time under 2000 copies daily, was a man of great influence in the political world, and largely associated, on a footing of personal intimacy, with many of the most eminent members of the House of Lords and House of Commons. As regards the material view of the matter, the daily metropolitan

Press, at the close of the last and the commencement of the present century, had considerably improved as compared with the newspaper journalism of half a century previously. But it was as far behind the journalism of the present day as it was before that of the middle of the eighteenth century. When I use, in this instance, the word "material," I allude to the size of the paper, its quality, its typography,—its appearance, in a word,—to the eye. The quality of the paper, though better than fifty years before, was of a coarse, dingy kind. The type, too, seemed always old, although it must at some time or other have been new. The size, usually in four columns per page, and always consisting of four pages, was somewhat larger than the *Globe* would be, if in four, instead of being in eight pages.

One great feature of newspaper journalism seventy years ago was a certain proportion of gossip in relation to the upper classes of society, mingled with the ridicule of the forms and follies of fashionable life. Contributions of this kind were the great attractions of the daily newspaper of the period of which I am speaking. What man or woman of the year 1871 could imagine that he or she could ever have read in the *Times*, the contribution to that journal which follows,—much less that it should have appeared in its columns in the year 1801. The communication appeared under the following heading,—which was no doubt very attractive at the time:—

SPECIMEN OF MODERN INTELLIGENCE FROM THE  
FASHIONABLE WORLD.

No. I.

The Hon. Mr. Dash sports a new chariot, which is the pride of Long Acre, and the envy of Hyde Park.

The fashionable Mrs. Hog has taken No. 127, Manchester Place, where she will receive her numerous list of elegant friends, as soon as her little drawing-room has got the new paper.

The little Misses Hyps, of Piccadilly celebrity, are learning to play on the pianoforte.

It will give great uneasiness to the world of ton to hear that the fashionable Mrs. Trapes has cut her little finger, which interrupts the progress of her exquisite bell-ropes.

Last night we received an express from Portman Square, containing the important intelligence, that Mrs. Fiddle-dum's ball is kept up with great spirit, and that the negus was excellent. More particulars by to-morrow's mail.

Our courier from the east has just brought word, that Alderman Guttle's grand dinner was dressed in a most superb style by Mr. Deputy Broth. The macaroni was burned, it is said, by design, but the incendiary is not yet discovered.

It may be relied on, that Mrs. Bumpkin will have a rout this evening. Invited: Mr. Jones, Mrs. Jones, and three Misses Jones; Mr. Mrs. and Mr. Thompson, jun.; thirteen Mr. Smiths; six Browns; two Sparks; two Walkers; Messieurs and Mesdames Williams, Edwards, Tomkins, Johnsons, and Nichols's; Miss Winifrede and Miss Jemima Nichols; Mrs. and Miss Pratt; Mr. and the beautiful Mrs. Bumpkin, jun., besides a large et cetera of fashionables.

Sergeant Palaver gave a grand dinner to Counsellor Quash and a select party of legal fashionables. The company parted at an early hour, in the utmost good humour, with themselves.

## No. II.

The great world were last night assembled at the fashionable Mrs. Plug's. It was the greatest squeeze of the winter. Mrs. Flip and Miss Amelia Flirt, we are afflicted to say, fainted in the doorway; but the friends of those agreeable ladies need be under no apprehension, as our reporter saw one of them playing afterwards with great resolution at Casino, and the other was effectually recovered by winning a dashing pool at Commeree. The public may depend upon the accuracy of this interesting piece of intelligence.

Sir John and Lady Rip, Sir Thomas Rag, and the junior Mr. Bobtail, were at the head of a crowd of fashion. Miss Perks was universally admired; indeed she looked all the better for her delightful ride in the morning, which was the talk of the pedestrian *beau monde*. Report says, that a German Baron is soon to lead this fair fashionable to the hymeneal altar; but if we may judge by the looks of Sir Ralph Firk, the rumour had not reached the ears of that worthy Baronet.

By the Brompton mail we have received intelligence, that the pretty Miss Figg has nearly cured her cough by sugar-candy; and that the doctors have taken their last fee. Her noble visitors may therefore shortly expect another vocal treat at the Lodge. Mr. Abraham Figg has made great progress upon the violin, and is to take the lead next Friday. Mr. Salomon is engaged *en second*.

Our express from Grosvenor Square brings the unfortunate information, that our reporters have been very rudely treated in Lord Haughty's hall; and that at the Duke of Nottingham's, they have literally been kicked down stairs.

The war having interrupted this channel of our information, we have only to say, that, according to the best private intelligence, the half of the first fifty pages of the red-book visit the Duke and the other my Lord; and that we shall be able, notwithstanding hostilities, to procure authentic intelligence *viâ* the confectioner and the waiters for the night.

A bye-courier is just arrived to inform us there were no green peas in Grosvenor Square during the whole evening; and that there was not asparagus enough for the company.

N.B. The music at my Lord's was very bad.

P.S. Mrs. Puff' will be at home to her friends, et cetera, to-morrow evening.

And without mercy for the opera, the delightful Lady Lungs has determined to throw her doors open to the musical world.

### No. III.

Mrs. Dripping's ball was the fashion of last evening. The light fantastic party kept it up till Phœbus intruded with unwelcome rays. The eldest Miss Dripping is allowed to be a sweet dancer; and her minuet with the fashionable Mr. Trip was the *chef d'œuvre* of a most delightful evening.

Lady Fub had a card party, in the same street; but there were three times as many coaches before Mrs. Dripping's door, who enjoyed a complete triumph over Pam and the four Aces.

Miss Lydia Dripping, the public will be concerned to hear, was prevented from joining in the festive dance by a bad chilblain, for which she is prescribed to sit with her foot in bran and warm water.

The company, which was very select, consisted of Mons. Frisso, Mad. Frimaire, the pretty Mrs. Sharp, with her rosy daughter, Mrs. Short, Mrs. Blunt, the new-married Lady Froust, who looked bewitchingly, and the fashionable Widow Tag, whose first re-appearance in the gay world, with our usual priority of intelligence, we take this opportunity of announcing, as well as Miss Tivy's recovery from the fall out of her gig; of which none of our competitors received advices.

Mrs. Dripping, besides the usual proportion of Smiths, Browns, Jones's, Jenkinsons, and Walkers, had the happiness of entertaining Doctors Raff and Roe; Captains Maclaughlin, O'Flannerty, and Tomlins; Sirs Ralph Fry,

and Robert Fish, and a long list of fashionables too numerous for insertion.

INVALIDS OF FASHION.—Lord Lone, Lady Stark, Lady Godiva Stark, and the junior Dangle.

CHANGES OF RESIDENCE.—Mr. Lee to No. 4, Oxford Street, one pair of stairs.

Sir Frederic First has taken the elegant mansion of the late Lady Large, in Piccadilly.

The fashionable Misses Towns are in treaty for a furnished house in Sloane Street. The Brompton ton are anxious for their success.

The public may rely upon it, that Mrs. Trapes is recovering fast from her accident. By the bulletin of her health we have the satisfaction of finding, that her finger will heal without a sear. The amateurs of the pianoforte will rejoice in this piece of news.

We are sorry to be under the disagreeable necessity of announcing, that the attentions and hospitalities of Mrs. Plug have been ungratefully rewarded with a severe cold; but the host of titled and fashionable inquirers, last evening, had the pleasure of being told that she was something better. The public may depend upon the accuracy of our report on Monday.

#### No. IV.

FASHIONABLE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THIS EVENING.—At home, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Hopkins, four Mrs. Smiths.

Mrs. Charles Clutton's rout.

Mrs. Galimathia's conversazione.

INVALIDS OF FASHION.—Lady Godiva Stark is recovering fast under the care of Doctor Dickie.

The bulletin of Mrs. Plug's health states her little finger to have festered, so that we may easily conjecture the morning ride of this day's fashion.

The junior Mr. Dangle, it is said, has consented to have his tooth drawn.

BOYS OF FASHION.—Master Birch is entered at West-



minster, to the great mortification of Eton, Winchester, and Harrow!!

Mrs. Dripping's charming little boy has a private tutor at last.

Lady Dunce's second son is reading Æsop's Fables:

Lord Slaver and the Hon. little Mr. Snivel are to be put into breeches on Thursday next. We pledge our credit with our readers for this piece of intelligence.

GIRLS OF FASHION.—Miss Higgs and Miss P. Hicks are at the school in Queen Square; Miss Hyppolite Higgs, in Great Cumberland Street, with her charming friend, Miss Rip, whose accomplishments are highly spoken of. We pledge ourselves, that Miss Rip speaks French admirably, and that no young lady of her age dances a hornpipe to compare with her; but Miss Higgs is unrivalled in her embroidery, and at Whist and Casino; which, by the way, we announce, exclusively, to be taught in the fashionable boarding-schools.

FOOTMEN OF FASHION.—William and Thomas have left the fashionable Mrs. Bull; but not upon account of wages or church-going, as has been said by our ignorant competitors. The reason of their giving warning is a profound mystery. N.B. They want places, and have no objection to wear any livery, having turned their coats already.

Lord Thoughtless has increased his establishment by a groom of the chambers: and Sir Lionel Lofty has changed his silver lace to gold.

The negotiation with regard to vails and wages is still *en train* at the Thirteen Cantons, where the *diet* is regular.

HORSES OF FASHION.—Titmouse and Barbara were yesterday exercised in Hyde Park. Prince in the ride.

Flyaway is indisposed at the Veterinary. Bobtail has a bad thrush; and it caused infinite concern yesterday to the *beau monde* at Tattersal's, to learn that Glander and Spavin are amiss, owing to the injudicious manner in which they have been inoculated!

ASSES OF FASHION.—Our reporter having unfortunately

met with an accident yesterday, in Bond Street, we are under the necessity of postponing our fashionable intelligence upon this head.

Only let the reader imagine, if he can, what would be the public surprise if, to-morrow morning, the above, or anything like it, were to appear in the *Times*. No one of the millions who read that journal could realize to himself the fact that such a contribution ever appeared in its columns, and had, too, assigned to it a prominence which showed that it was regarded by the conductors as the principal attraction in the impression of the paper in which it appeared. I ought to add that it was reproduced as a gem in a work published in a series of volumes in the early part of the century, under the title of “The Spirit of the Public Journals.”

The *Times*, however, did not devote so much of its space to lengthened articles on subjects of this nature as some of its contemporaries. But the *Times* made it a feature to publish short paragraphs in which the follies of the day, and especially in the upper classes of society, were scourged with an unsparing hand. In this work, which seemed to that journal a labour of love, there was often much wit mingled with severity. The following is a fair sample of the brief but pungent paragraphs, which were common in the columns of the *Times* in the first year of the present century:—“Many ladies have been unjustly accused of extravagance and dissipation, in gadding abroad and frequenting Plays, Operas, and Assemblies.

These, however, are the only economical wives, for a lady cannot now be 'At Home' for a single evening at a less expense than 100*l.* for forced fruits, forced meats, and forced poultry, with other things out of season, which she is forced to force down the throats of her visitors. In every prudent contract of marriage it is now the fashion to stipulate how many nights in the year the Lady shall be suffered to be in her own house; and we have just been assured, that a worthy Baronet has broke off his engagement, because the bride had proposed being 'At Home' twice in the course of the honeymoon."

We fear that were the *Times* of our day to give information to that part of the public which cannot claim a place in the category of the upper Ten Thousand, and therefore are comparatively unacquainted with its ways, instead of limiting the expenses of a first-rate "At Home" to 100*l.*, it would have to set down the sum at 250*l.*; while others, given on a still more princely scale of expenditure, would require to be stated as being not less than 300*l.* I knew indeed, many years ago, an instance of an "At Home" costing the party giving it no less than 2500*l.*; but it is right to state, that probably there never was a greater assemblage of the aristocracy of England than on that occasion, and that the supper on the occasion, which was given in Willis's Rooms, was one of the most superb ever known in this or in any other country. It is right, however, I should add, that while the parties invited were, in the majo-

rity of cases, members of the fashionable world—strictly speaking so called—the gentleman who was the donor of the magnificent banquet and ball was a bachelor, and died a few years ago as such.

I will only give one more quotation from the *Times* of 1800, as an attestation of the piquancy and “point” which at that time characterized the paragraphs of the kind to which I am referring:—“It is observed in one of the papers that the female waist is contracting itself. This fashion may suit the present season very well. Sir Roger De Coverley, in the *Spectator*, says that in about forty weeks after this genial season the waist used to assume a different shape, which generally gave him much trouble in his capacity of Justice of the Peace.”

No one can fail to perceive the point contained in this paragraph. The difficulty would be to say whether the preference was due to the wit of Sir Roger De Coverley, or to the contributor to the *Times* for the way which the latter has turned it to account. My own opinion is, that the claims of each are on a par.

Were the *Times* of 1871 to be paid 5000*l.* for it, it would not give insertion to any paragraph resembling in subject and style the latter of the two paragraphs I have quoted. So much for the character of the *Times* in 1871, and the *Times* seventy years ago.

Fashionable frivolities seem to have been the principal theme on which the journals of seventy years since especially delighted to dwell. In the remarks these journals made on the dress and manners of

people in high life at the beginning of the century, we of the present day get a very instructive glance at the state of matters in the upper circles at the period in question. The *Morning Chronicle* had the reputation, at this time, of being the most correct, in its notions of morality and propriety, of all its contemporaries, yet even that correct journal felt it to be its duty to apply itself to the work of "lashing folly" in fashionable life, as it then flew. Here is a specimen of the way in which the *Morning Chronicle* did its work by means of a contributor. The article is headed—

THE NATIONAL MORALITY IMPLICATED IN  
FEMALE DRESS.

While the public mind is agitated by speculations concerning peace or war, my attention is occupied by a subject of far deeper importance. The stormy cloud which now threatens us may blow over, but there is a destructive pestilence among us, which I fear it will be impossible ever to check. After the eloquent speeches of some reverend prelates in the House of Lords a year or two ago, it would surely be superfluous in me to prove the dependence of national morality upon female dress. Well, what has been the effect of all the sermons, dissertations, essays, and paragraphs that have been written against vestimentary errors and offences? Have stays been resumed? Have ten-inch tuckers become fashionable? Have petticoats been lengthened? But we have no longer any right to put these questions. Our own sex, in effeminacy, exceeds the indecency of the other. Do we not every day even hear of Bond Street loungers blanching their hands with cosmetics, and embrowning their cheeks with walnut juice?

The evil is certainly beyond all ordinary means of cure. The divine, the philosopher, the wit, and the physician will

exert themselves in vain. Many wish to "cover the naked," but the naked will not be covered. Still we must not give ourselves up to despair. Let us make one grand effort in behalf of civilized society; and, if it should go to pieces, having a good conscience, we will remain undaunted amidst its ruins.

Sir, I propose instantly to call in the interference of the legislature. Instead of passing penal acts against Crim. Con., how much better to crush it in its birth? Why was Mons, together with all the towns in Austrian Flanders, taken so easily by the French? Because the Emperor Joseph had dismantled their fortifications. Let its proper defences be restored to Virtue by authority of Parliament, and it will become unassailable.

But this plan, though feasible, will be attended, in its execution, with innumerable difficulties. I do not allude to the opposition the bill would meet with in the two Houses, although I am a little afraid of female influence. Few M.P.'s obey the instructions of their constituents. I imagine there are a few who are not at liberty to shew equal contempt for the representations of their wives and daughters. Peccesses, by our constitution, have not a seat in the House of Lords, yet there are probably not many, either dukes, or marquises, or earls, or viscounts, or barons, who are not fully convinced that they have a voice. But, supposing the utmost unanimity to prevail in both chambers, and that our gracious Sovereign would be ready to sanction any measures for the good of his female subjects, I scarcely see how it would be possible to proceed with effect. Must there be a particular act, regulating every piece of dress, with a schedule annexed? In three years the size of the statute-book would be doubled. Instead of the progress of money bills, road bills, and divorce bills, we should read in the newspapers of nothing but of the Fichu Bill being committed; the Landau Bill being reported; the Smock Bill being sent to the Lords; and of the following having gone through their respective stages: the Petticoat Lengthening



Bill; the Jumps Stiffening Bill; the Two-inch Waist Elongation Bill; the Bill to prohibit the use of flesh-coloured Stockings, &c. However beneficial their consequence might be, I know not if it would be altogether consistent with the dignity of Parliament to spend a week debating bills with such a preamble as this:—

“Whereas an evil practice hath lately grown up among divers giddy girls, to cock their bonnets, not upon the middle of their heads, as was used of old time, as is decent and seemly, but upon the side thereof; whereby it cometh to pass that one of their ears is un-covered, dis-covered, and laid bare, while the other lies hid, concealed, and out of sight: And whereas this sight doth greatly disturb his Majesty’s liege subjects of all degrees, ranks, and employments: Be it enacted, by the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that from and after, &c. &c.”

The House of Commons would not have a moment to spare for the discussion of treaties of peace, or for the impeachment of ministers. Princes may defraud, and have punishments ordained for them. But how is it possible to foresee, or to prevent, the ramifications of folly? Every rout, every ball, every packet from France, will render necessary a new bill of pains and penalties. And you are not to suppose that these are to be hurried through the House like a bill for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act; a bill to strangle political discussion. Women are not thus to be deprived of their prescriptive right to arrange their ribands, and to adjust their handkerchiefs, as to them seems good. Due notice must be given to all concerned; petitions must be received; counsel must be heard; milliners, mantua-makers, and perfumers must be examined at the bar. Although the bills should be infinitely better drawn than those by Messrs. —— and ——, and though they should be submitted to the Blue Stocking Club instead of

the twelve Judges, yet, in legislating upon such new, strange, and uncouth subjects, what ambiguities and obscurities would necessarily arise? It might be necessary to bring in seven bills during the same session to explain, amend, and render more effectual an act regulating the form, suspension, and lawful purposes of the ridicule.

Besides, the question must at once occur—supposing this code of fashionable law framed with the wisdom of a Solon, how is it to be executed? Shall the process be by indictment? Having Burn by me, I must furnish a precedent:—"Middlesex to wit—The jurors of our Lord the King, upon their oaths present, that ———, spinster, commonly called Lady G——, not having, &c. but on the 27th day of April, in the forty-second year of, &c. &c. did at a congregation of loose and disorderly persons, named a rout, held in Portman Square, in the county aforesaid, craftily intending to steal men's hearts, and to burn their livers, then and there appear, with her, &c. &c. to the evil example of others in the like case offending, against the peace of our said Lord the now King, his crown and dignity, and against the form of the statute in such case made and provided."

But how is it to be tried? Lord Kenyon, I am sure, would not have ventured to direct a jury upon such points! and, deeply as his worthy successor is read in statutes and reports, I scarcely think he would presume to decide upon the cut of a sleeve, or the position of a zone. The sheriff might be directed to return a jury of elegantes; but this would be making them judges in their own cause. There would be no such thing as impartiality or justice in such a tribunal, even though ancient virgins were excluded. Suppose that Lady Elizabeth C., Lady Charlotte S., the Honourable Miss V., the Countess of P., and her Grace of ———, were sworn "well and truly to try, and a true deliverance make, between our Sovereign Lord the King and the beautiful Mrs. P.," whom they all envy and detest, can charity suppose that they would remember their oaths?

Although our researches have hitherto been so unsuc-

cessful, I assure you that I have a plan in contemplation free from every possible objection, and calculated to produce the most salutary consequences. This I shall fully detail to you the moment that the present preliminary article appears in the *Morning Chronicle*. As you are a steady supporter of morals, I cannot doubt that you will give it a place, however dull you may think it.

No one can read the above without feeling how applicable the censure which is there so liberally and deservedly bestowed, is to female fashions in the present day. Anything more grotesque than the modes of dress which prevail among the ladies of 1871, could not be conceived by the most fertile fancy. It would be a nice question to decide whether the female costumes described by the *Morning Chronicle* as those which were the fashion in the beginning of the century, or those which are now in vogue, ought to be regarded as the most unnatural.

But of all the morning metropolitan papers, the one that we of the present day, should least of all have expected to be holding up the fashionable world to ridicule, is the *Morning Post*. Yet it was as unsparing in its censures, seventy years ago, as any of its contemporaries, of the follies of fashionable life. The following specimen I give, not because it is one of the best, but because its brevity makes it the most suitable for my space. It is entitled—

#### FASHIONABLE FAIRS.

In Piccadilly, at the Duchess's, dancers have been plentiful, and they went off very well.

Tattlers were in great request; but spectators hung very heavily on the market.

Nobles have been much wanted at Mrs. M——'s, and Mrs. Th——'s. The fear of a stoppage being put to the importation of them from Ireland has greatly heightened the demand.

There is a great scarcity of patriots in Westminster, most of them having been bought up by certain great monopolizers. At Westminster Hall, however, tongues never were in greater abundance, nor fees more rare.

Characters are in general request all over London; but those for the City must be very different from those for the West End of the town.

Pigeons are extremely scarce at the West End of the town, and those that come to market are poor and of little value. And yet every market is overstocked with rooks.

Wits were rather scarce at Mrs. W——'s last week, and the demand for them continues to increase. Beauties were plentiful, and very dear to admirers.

Puppies and loungers are quite drugs upon the Bond Street market, and in general they are of very little value, though they too often cost a great deal—to their tailors.

The *Morning Herald* in the beginning of the century did not deal so much in the matter of lashing the fashionable follies of the day, as its contemporaries; but it made witty articles, in the shape of letters, or in some other form, one of its features. I subjoin a sample which appeared under the heading of—

#### HOW TO CRY.

It is a great happiness that the discharge by the eyes, which is certainly as necessary as any other natural discharge, is now likely to have vent in politics. The tragedies

of modern times have so little to cause tears that we are more disposed to laugh at them. The "pearly drops of sensibility" will now, however, decorate the modest and fair cheeks of manly orators, and a bill for the good of the nation will swim from House to House, uphelden by a tide of patriotic tears!

How pathetic! how persuasive! to deal out arguments, not in the dry way of logic, but distilled, drop by drop, and received on a white handkerchief!

I am a junior member, and not yet acquainted with the forms of the House; but, as I have not been very long from school, I presume I can make a cry, if I can't make a speech. But I would fain know the proper times for political crying; for as there are some stages of a bill more proper than others to comment upon it, so I should be glad to know whether we are to cry on the first or second reading; or whether, on such occasions as the last one, I might not venture to report progress, and ask leave to cry again.

I trust, however, that these matters will be placed clearly before our eyes, and that no person will have occasion to pretend ignorance.

I conceive, and almost with tears in my eyes, that this crying fashion has been imported from the French, who in the whole business of the revolution have shown themselves great masters of stage effect.—When the Queen appears before "her beloved people," she cries; pinches the Dauphin, and he cries, and then they all cry—and it was but the other day that M. Fayette went a step farther, and actually fainted! This probably was because he could not cry; for the doctors say, that in all such cases, you must do one or the other.

I am now beginning to collect precedents of crying from the accession of Oliver Cromwell (and that made a great many cry) until the battle of Canada, fought on May the 6th, 1791.—These I shall arrange, so as to form "A Complete System of Political Weeping," a publication which I

am certain will be of great service, even to trade, by increasing the consumption of cambric handkerchiefs, and promoting the manufacture of smelling-bottles.

In many pieces of the kind of which I have given the preceding specimens, there was a great deal of wit and pungency. The newspaper proprietors retained the best talent for writing of that description, which they could procure on what they considered reasonable terms. In the daily papers of seventy years ago there was another feature, which was perhaps the next greatest in the journals of that period. I allude to the space which they devoted to poetry. Years sometimes pass away without seeing a single line of original poetry in the *Times* or any other morning paper; but in the journals of seventy years since, poetical effusions on questions or incidents of the day, were expected to appear at brief intervals. One of these on the Epsom Races of 1801 is very happy in its humour, and so closely resembles the Epsom Races of 1871, that it might have been written for the Derby Day of last May. The morning journal for which it was written was the *Oracle*. It will be seen that there is a good deal of the "John Gilpin" manner in the effusion.

#### EPSOM RACES IN 1801.

Come, Madam Muse, new nib thy pen  
And put on thy best graces,  
To sing in merry jocund strain  
The joys of Epsom races.



Curricles, coaches, chaises, gigs,  
Beaux, bloods, and men of trade,  
Blacklegs, nobles, peers, and prigs,  
All join the cavalcade.

The young, the old, the brown, the fair,  
Of pleasure take their fill ;  
The mania spreads from Berkeley Square,  
As far as Fish Street Hill.

Miss Drugget cries, " My sweet papa,  
Let's go to Epsom, pray ;  
There's you and I, and dear Mamma,  
Will fill a one-horse chay.

" In order to go safe and slow,  
By daybreak we'll set off ;  
The ride will do you good, I know,  
And cure your nasty cough.

" I *doats* upon the country now,  
How sweet the *wernal* breezes !  
We'll take our dinner too, I *wow*,  
And dine beneath the *treezes*."

Old Drugget shook his cranium wise,  
But Madam cried, " I fegs !  
What though old Dobbin's lost both eyes,  
He still has got four legs.

" You cruel man, you're more severe  
Than Chinese, Turk, or Persian ;  
Deny your wife and daughter dear  
But one short day's diversion ?

" So, Mr. Drugget, pray give o'er,  
And mind what I desire ;  
Go to the liv'ryman next door,  
And quick a buggy hire."

The Cit found all resistance naught,  
 My lady was in *arnest* ;  
 The chaise was hir'd, provisions bought,  
 And poor old Dobbin harness'd.

Through every village that they went  
 The boys began a hooting ;  
 Their luckless steed was almost spent  
 Before they got to Tooting.

Old Drugget laid on many a blow,  
 And whipp'd with might and main ;  
 And now behold, he cried " Gee-ho !"  
 And now he jerk'd the rein.

At length he turn'd to spousy dear,  
 And said, " My sweetest jewel,  
 The race-ground, love, is very near,  
 For, see, we're ent'ring Ewell."

Reaching, at last, the crowded course,  
 They gap'd, they star'd, they wonder'd ;  
 Whilst bets upon the fav'rite horse  
 Vociferously thunder'd.

The Cit exclaim'd, " Confound this din ;  
 I wish, as I'm a sinner,  
 This cursed racing would begin,  
 That I might get my dinner.

" What with the fagging that I've had,  
 By Jove I'm almost dead !  
 Holla ! you, Sir ! come here, my lad,  
 You, gin and gingerbread !"

But when the racing list he reads,  
 To trust his sight afraid is ;  
 " Zounds ! here's not only *sporting steeds*,  
 But also *sporting ladies* !

“ Sure there was never such a scene,  
Since days of Father Adam :  
I'll see it nearer ;” out he leapt,  
And gave the reins to Madam.

Ent'ring a booth, a dext'rous cheat,  
In trick and cunning able,  
Seduc'd the unsuspecting Cit  
To join an E O table.

Tempted by play's inviting call,  
A guinea bright he ventures ;  
And views the circling of the ball,  
On expectation's tenters.

Breathless with joy, he gain'd his chaise,  
And cried, “ The guinea's won !”  
But who can paint his grief, amaze—  
His fav'rite watch was gone !

With dreadful ire his bosom burn'd,  
But now the horses start ;  
Alas ! the chaise was overturn'd,  
By running 'gainst a cart !

Away went Drugget and his dear,  
Away went ham and chicken ;  
With bottles, glasses, wine, and beer,  
Ye gods, what pretty picking !

There, too, good lack ! between the wheels  
Was seen their hapless daughter,  
Kicking aloft her lovely heels,  
'Midst copious streams of porter !

“ I've lost my wig,” poor Drugget roar'd—  
“ Your wig ! that's nought,” cried Miss ;  
“ Mamma has spoil'd her bran-new gown,  
And I my blue pelisse.”

The unlucky chaise went quite to pot,  
Old Dobbin, too, was undone;  
At great expense a cart they got  
To take them back to London.

Arriv'd at home, th' enraged Cit,  
With words the most uncivil,  
Sent horses, jockies, E O too,  
All packing to the devil!

In the same journal as that from which I have made the preceding quotation, there was given a series of sketches of the most fashionable ladies of the period. The series commenced at the close of 1799, and continued through the early part of 1800. Had it not been that these poetic sketches of ladies of prominence, either for their aristocratic connexions, or for some other kind of distinction, did not in all cases, though they did in some, consist of the fourteen lines which are deemed indispensable to the orthodox Sonnet,—they would have come under that class of poetical effusions. I subjoin two samples. The first relates to the then Duchess of Gordon,—“the brilliant Duchess of Gordon,” as she was called, who, though not strictly speaking, handsome, exercised a marvellous fascination over all men and women alike, with whom she came in contact. Even William Pitt, a man who, as a rule, saw no attractions in women, not even in the greatest beauties of the Court during his Premiership,—even he was a perfect slave to the Duchess of Gordon, and often said to her and to others, that were it not that he was married to his

country, and never could have any other bride, he would marry one of her three daughters. The following is the sketch of her Grace:—

THE DUCHESS OF GORDON.!

Behold the placid sweetness of her mien ;  
'Tis like the radiance of the blushing morn,  
Diffusing wide the genial sweets of May ;  
Behold her upright, befitting well  
Her titled state and high nobility.  
In her the British Matron is displayed ;  
In her gay Fashion shines,—from folly free,  
No girlish airs—no tricks—no smiles unmeaning,  
Taint her visage. Each look is wisdom fraught,  
Each smile beams love to all. This is the dame  
In whom both Wisdom, Wit, and Mirth combine,  
With Charity to stamp her soul divine.  
'Tis Gordon affable, 'tis Gordon free,  
Whose living fame shall reach posterity ;  
Whose liberal heart for human sorrow grieves ;  
Whose breast can pity, and whose hand relieves.  
'Tis Gordon, first in Fashion's airy throng ;  
Alive to Mirth, awake to Misery's Song.

The other quotation which I will give as a specimen of the newspaper poetry of the year 1800, consists of a sketch of Mrs. Sheridan, wife of the celebrated Mr. Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

MRS. SHERIDAN.

Mark her shape and witching air ;  
'Twas that form so chastely fair,  
'Twas that grace and dimpled smile  
Did the statesman's heart beguile ;

Yes, the Sage confessed Love's fire—  
 Who could gaze and not admire?  
 Live then, fair one! live in joy;  
 Charms like thine can never cloy:  
 No, Love's garland ne'er shall fade,  
 For 'twas Wisdom deck'd the maid,  
 And Venus' self her form array'd.

Be it remembered that the series of sketches of which the above are fair specimens, of the aristocratic and fashionable ladies who figured most prominently in the circles of high life in the beginning of the present century,—did not appear in some obscure weekly journal, but in a morning paper which at the time competed with the other morning papers, including the *Times* and the *Morning Chronicle*, both in circulation and popularity. I leave it to the reader to picture to his own mind what would be the amount of amazement were any of the morning papers of the present day to give a similar series of poetical sketches of the beauties of Queen Victoria's Court.

It will surprise most of the readers of this work when I mention the fact, that while the morning journals of seventy years ago devoted so much of their space to matter of the kind of which I have furnished specimens, there was nothing in the shape of general intelligence in their pages. There might, it is true, have been a simple reference to the fact that an International Exhibition was opened early in May, but no account of the circumstances under which the opening took place. The late lucifer match monster procession to Parliament might, in the same



way have been alluded to, but that would have been all. Public meetings of all descriptions passed by without any record. Law intelligence, police intelligence, and public proceedings of all kinds, however interesting, were then entirely ignored. What a contrast in every way with the morning journals of our day! It is by contrasting those of 1871 with the daily journals of the beginning of the eighteenth, or even the nineteenth century, that we can best appreciate the character of the journalism of this country in the days in which these volumes are brought before the public.

## CHAPTER XI.

### PAST METROPOLITAN DAILY PAPERS.

#### THE MORNING CHRONICLE.—PART FIRST.

Commencement of the *Morning Chronicle*—Mr. William Woodfall—Mr. James Perry—Literary Men on Mr. Perry's Staff, including Mr. Sergeant Spankie, Mr. S. T. Coleridge, Mr. Thomas Campbell, Mr. Charles Lamb, Mr. John Campbell, afterwards Lord Campbell, Lord Chancellor of England; Mr. Mackintosh, afterwards Sir James Mackintosh, Mr. William Hazlitt—Profits of the *Morning Chronicle* at Mr. Perry's Death—Editorship of Mr. John Black—"Tom Hill"—Literary Men on Mr. Black's Staff—Mr. George Hogarth, Mr. John Payne Collier, Mr. Albany Fonblanque, Rev. W. J. Fox, &c.

BEFORE I come to the existing daily journals it is necessary, in order that I may make my history of the Newspaper Press as complete as possible, that I should devote some amount of the space at my disposal to a retrospective glance at some of the political journals, which, within the memory of many persons now living, enjoyed a great popularity, and exercised a powerful influence on the public mind. I will take them in the order in which they entered the newspaper world.

In accordance with this arrangement I begin with the late *Morning Chronicle*, regarding which I have

made some anticipatory remarks in what I have said of Mr. William Woodfall, the brother of Mr. Henry Sampson Woodfall, the printer and editor of the *Public Advertiser*. The *Morning Chronicle* was started in 1769. I have not been able to ascertain who were the parties by whom it was commenced. All that is definitely known with regard to the circumstances connected with its birth, is that Mr. William Woodfall was its first editor, reporter, and printer,—a combination of functions which though no longer existing in connexion with any daily paper, was to be found in the case of every newspaper till towards the close of the last century. The *Morning Chronicle* was not, in the first instance, its only title. There was the addition to that title, of the words, “*and London Advertiser*.” Its principles were thoroughly those of the Whig party, then a growing party in Parliament and the country; but it is admitted that it was not set on foot so much to promote certain political principles, as to accomplish commercial ends. With these the projectors felt confident they would be successful, because the *Public Advertiser*, the *Daily Advertiser*, and one or two other newspapers, were at the time profitable journalistic properties. Mr. William Woodfall, who, because of his remarkable memory in remembering, and afterwards reporting with the most perfect accuracy, from recollection, any speech he had ever heard, was called “Memory Woodfall,” continued to conduct the *Morning Chronicle* for a term of ten years. It was not, however, during that period commercially

a success, nor did it gain for itself any high journalistic reputation. On its establishment, and for many years afterwards, it had but a poor appearance, both in a material and mental sense. It consisted of four pages, somewhat larger than four pages of our present *Globe*, and containing less matter, because the type, generally speaking, was larger, while more space was appropriated to advertisements. These statements apply to the earliest number which is to be found in the British Museum, which is numbered 889, and dated the 28th March, 1772, being considerably more than two years and a half after the appearance of the first number. The imprint was: "Printed for William Woodfall." The names of the proprietors of the newspapers of these times were always concealed, lest, if known to the public, they might become known to the Government of the day, and thereby expose them to unpleasant consequences both as regarded their purse and persons. This is an explanation of the fact with which all must be acquainted who are conversant with the Newspaper Press of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was always the registered, not the real proprietor of the journal, who was made the victim whenever actions for libel were brought against it.

Down till the year 1781, of which I am speaking, most readers will, I am sure, feel surprised when I mention that the *Morning Chronicle* should have had no leading article, not even the very semblance of one. At least there was nothing of that kind in any of the numbers which I have seen, and which

appeared nearly twelve years after the journal was started; and though I cannot positively assert that none appeared in the numbers which had previously been published, the general character of the paper would lead to the conclusion, that leading articles were not one of its features. When I mention this fact, the wonder will cease how the functions of editor, printer, and publisher, could be, as they were, all combined in one person. The editor had no duty to perform in the way of writing anything original. The only thing, indeed, original in the *Morning Chronicle*, in the year 1780—the volume for which year I have carefully looked over—were a few paragraphs of political or other intelligence, and two or three letters in some particular impression of the paper. The heading—“Morning Chronicle, London, &c.”—which preceded the leading articles in its later history, was followed, when Parliament was sitting, by debates in Parliament. It is the same now in the case of many provincial papers. It will be seen, therefore, that Mr. William Woodfall, however great may have been his responsibility in the case of actions, as printer of the *Morning Chronicle*, had a perfect sinecure as editor of the paper. All that he had to look after, as editor, was to see that no libellous matter got into its columns.

Mr. James Perry succeeded Mr. Woodfall as editor of the *Morning Chronicle* in 1789. As the new editor soon raised the character and circulation of that journal to a point which in either sense no daily

paper had reached, with the exception, for a few years, of the *Public Advertiser*; and as the *Morning Chronicle* maintained both its character and prosperity during the forty years and upwards it was under his sole editorial control, it is but due to a man whose memory still occupies so prominent a place in the journalism of Great Britain, that an outline of the career of Mr. Perry should be given in a work devoted to a history of the Newspaper Press.

He was born in Aberdeen in 1756, and educated at Marischal College of that city. But his father, who was a somewhat extensive builder, having failed just as young Perry left the university, he repaired to Edinburgh, in the hope of getting into some lawyer's office there. Disappointed in that, he proceeded to Manchester, where in his twentieth year he got a situation in a counting-house in that great emporium of manufacture and commerce. There he became a member of some debating society, which chose for its discussion topics more or less intimately related to questions of a philosophical kind. The knowledge of these subjects which young Perry displayed, and the abilities he showed in debate, together with the talent which characterized some of his literary essays, attracted the attention of intellectual men in Manchester; and several of these, on his leaving soon after for London, gave him letters to literary men, in addition to those he had received to parties in the mercantile world. But instead of giving my own account of the appearance and sub-



sequent success of young Perry in the metropolis, I prefer transferring the account given in Nichols's work, "Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century,"—a work to which I have more than once acknowledged my obligations both for interesting literary and newspaper information. "For some time," says this author, "Mr. Perry's efforts (to obtain a situation) were unavailing. But the following circumstance at length procured him the employment which he sought, and placed him in the path to that eminence which he afterwards attained. While waiting in London for some situation presenting itself, he amused himself in writing fugitive verses and short essays, which he put into the letter-box of the *General Advertiser*, as the casual contributions of an anonymous correspondent; and they were of such merit as to procure immediate insertion. It happened that one of the parties to whom he had a letter of introduction, namely, Messrs. Richardson and Urquhart, were part proprietors of the *Advertiser*, and on these gentlemen Mr. Perry was in the habit of calling daily, to inquire if any situation had yet offered for him. On entering their shop one day, to make the usual inquiry, Mr. Perry found Mr. Urquhart earnestly engaged in reading an article in the *Advertiser*, and evidently with great satisfaction. When he had finished, the former put the now almost hopeless question, whether any situation had yet presented itself? and it was answered in the negative. 'But,' added Mr. Urquhart, 'if you could write such articles as this,' pointing to that

which he had just been reading, 'you would find immediate employment.' Mr. Perry glanced at the article, discovered that it was one of his own, and convinced his friend, Mr. Urquhart, by showing another article in manuscript, which he had intended to put into the box as usual before returning home. Pleased with the discovery, Mr. Urquhart immediately said that he would propose him as a stipendiary writer for the paper at a meeting of the proprietors which was to take place that very evening. The result was, that on the next day he was employed at the rate of a guinea a week, with an additional half guinea for assistance to the *London Evening Post*, printed by the same person. On receiving these appointments, Mr. Perry devoted himself with great assiduity to the discharge of their duties, and made efforts before unknown in the newspaper establishments of London."

No one, I am sure, will think this extract,\*respecting the circumstances connected with Mr. Perry's life, too long. It is another illustration, in addition to the millions of illustrations which have gone before, of the truth of the Shaksperian apophthegm, that "there is a tide in the affairs of men." The narrative is alike interesting and valuable, as showing what may be achieved even without brilliant abilities, by integrity, independence, industry, and perseverance.

But I ought, before I go further, to mention that though Mr. Perry became connected with the *Morning Chronicle* under the circumstances I have

related, he was only a stated contributor for a number of years. Nor was his editorship of the *Morning Chronicle* his first editorship. His first appointment to a newspaper editorial chair was in the case of a journal called the *Gazetteer*, at that time a paper of some reputation. I cannot name the time at which he became editor of this journal, but it was most probably in either the year 1782 or 1783, because we know that in the former year he had projected the *European Magazine*, but only conducted it for twelve months, and relinquishing its editorial duties because of his accession to the editorship of the *Gazetteer*. The salary he received for conducting the latter was four guineas per week. This would not seem in the present day a large salary for editing a morning paper; but when I come to speak of the editorial remuneration of Coleridge, when he conducted the *Morning Post*, and of the pay received by other gifted contributors, it will not be deemed so inadequate as at first sight might seem. I ought to add, that the *European Magazine*, which Perry projected, and edited for the first year, became a monthly periodical of the first class of its day, and continued to be published for the long period of forty years.

Mr. Perry continued to discharge the editorial duties of the *Morning Chronicle* for about twelve or thirteen years, when, in conjunction with Mr. Gray, a Scotchman, like himself, he purchased the copyright and all the appurtenances of that journal. I cannot give the exact date in which he became the half pro-

prietor of a newspaper which he had conducted all these years with much credit to himself, and much commercial advantage to the proprietors; but I find it stated in one Memoir of Mr. Perry's Life, that the transaction took place on the commencement of the French Revolution. In all probability, therefore, he must have become half proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle* about the year 1792. The purchase money, according to Mr. Knight Hunt's statement in his "Fourth Estate,"—a statement grounded, he assures us, on exclusive and undoubtedly reliable information,—was furnished by old Bellamy, at that time house-keeper of the Commons. The traditions of the "Kitchen" of the House of Commons for rump steaks and other improvised delicious dinners for the members, are as fresh now as they were eighty or ninety years ago, and promise to live for ever. Mr. Bellamy, in addition to the profitable position he thus occupied as ministering to the necessities of the members' appetites, was a wine-merchant, and enjoyed the credit of keeping "as good a bottle of port as ever was laid on a dinner-table." The purchase of the *Morning Chronicle* by Perry and Gray with the money advanced by old Bellamy, was celebrated by the purchase, on the part of the two Scotch proprietors of the journal, of so large a quantity of Bellamy's choicest port, that it is a historical fact, duly attested, that it lasted sufficiently long to allow of a liberal quantity of it being produced till Mr. Perry's death in 1821, at every anniversary dinner given to commemo-

rate the purchase of the paper,—a period of thirty years.

Two statements are made in Mr. Knight Hunt's "Fourth Estate," grounded on information which he says he received from a personal friend, and which had not before been made public,—of the accuracy of which I have great doubts. He says, first of all, that "though always proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle*, Mr. Perry was not always editor." I cannot absolutely contradict this statement, but neither in print, nor in the private conversations which I used to have with persons who ought to have known the fact, if such it had been, relative to the history of the *Morning Chronicle*, when I was connected with that journal upwards of thirty years ago,—did I ever meet with any confirmation of the statement. The traditions of the *Morning Chronicle* establishment, at that time were certainly to the effect, that from the time Mr. Perry formed an editorial connexion with that journal till towards the close of his life, he was its guiding spirit, editorially and managerially,—although he may have had others under him, to whom he confided a sort of co-editorship.

The second statement which Mr. Hunt makes on the authority of his friend, whose name he does not mention, is that "for several years the editorship of the *Morning Chronicle* was vested in Mr. R. Spankie." This Mr. Spankie was a barrister, and afterwards rose to the rank of sergeant in his profession. He also ultimately attained the distinction of

being chosen Member of Parliament for the borough of Finsbury at the first election after the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832. It is well known that in his early life, towards the close of the last century, Mr. Sergeant Spankie wrote largely in the leading article department of the *Morning Chronicle*; but I have never heard from any other source than Mr. Hunt, that he was editorially placed over Mr. Perry, which he must have been if there be truth in the other remark made by Mr. Hunt's informant, that "during a great part of Spankie's editorship he was by no means on good terms with Perry, and would often throw Perry's communications into the fire." I cannot bring myself to believe the latter part of this statement. Every one knows, who has any acquaintance with what the *Morning Chronicle* was in Perry's time, that he would have been the last man in the world to submit to such a humiliation. He was everything in connexion with that journal. In fact, the name of "Perry" and that of the *Morning Chronicle* were regarded as synonymous terms. The paper was, in other words, personified in Mr. Perry. Alike in private and in public the journal was a daily embodiment of his individual views on all the great questions of the day. Besides, it is an established historical fact, that Charles James Fox, and all the leading Peers and Members of the House of Commons belonging to the Whig party in politics, invariably carried on their personal intercourse with Mr. Perry as one whose influ-



ence was supreme in the control of the *Morning Chronicle*.

To Mr. Perry is due the credit of having introduced a new and important feature in the morning newspaper press, which, as I shall show hereafter, was still further very greatly developed with the lapse of years. I refer to the reporting of the debates in Parliament. Previous to his time only one or two reporters were sent to the Lords and Commons to report the proceedings in either House, and as their reports were only such as their memories enabled them to supply, they were necessarily always meagre, and not always correct. Perry sent a goodly number of reporters who could write shorthand, with instructions to take verbatim notes of speeches on important political questions. The result was, that not only did the reports of the *Morning Chronicle* surpass in copiousness and accuracy the "Memory Reports," but while the latter could only be got ready for the evening editions, the *Morning Chronicle* was enabled, by a division of labour, to get them published in the earliest editions of that journal. This gave the *Morning Chronicle* a great advantage over all its morning contemporaries, and raised it to the first rank, both in point of influence and circulation, in the daily papers of that period.

It is due to the memory of Mr. Perry to state that he raised the moral, social, and intellectual character of the *Morning Chronicle* to an elevation to which no newspaper, whether English or foreign, had ever

before attained. That was the object at which he aimed when he became sole editor of that journal. He introduced into it literary features to which all other newspapers had previously been strangers. One speedy and very natural result of this was that literary advertisements came to it in large numbers. On one occasion the house of Messrs. Longman & Co., of Paternoster Row—then as now enjoying a prestige which no other bookselling firm enjoyed—sent no fewer than sixty advertisements of books which were published by their house. This was towards the close of last century, and the circumstance—nothing like it ever having been known before—created a great sensation both in the bibliopolic and literary worlds.

With the view of raising the character of the *Morning Chronicle*, Mr. Perry looked around for writers of great literary talent, and he succeeded in finding men of very superior abilities, many of whose names never became publicly known. But several afterwards rose to great distinction. Mr. John Campbell, who eventually attained to the greatest prominence which a subject can reach, that of being Lord High Chancellor of England, was one of these. Coming from Scotland, and, as the current story goes, having walked all the way on foot, with just one pound in his pocket, he brought an introduction to Mr. Perry, who at once gave him an engagement on the *Chronicle*. There is considerable diversity of opinion as to the capacity in which he was engaged. I meet with several writers

who maintain that he was chiefly engaged as theatrical critic ; but I should not think it likely that it was to criticize dramatic performances that Mr. Campbell was specially employed on the *Morning Chronicle*. First of all, he was the son of the Rev. Dr. Campbell, a parish minister in Fifeshire, in Scotland, where he never could have seen any theatricals except the performances of an occasional half dozen ragged itinerant players ; and though he may have seen something of a higher order when now and then visiting Edinburgh, every Scotchman who knows anything of that place at the close of the last or commencement of the present century, must be well aware, that histrionic performances were at that time of so inferior a character, that he who had never seen anything of a higher class must have been unfitted to fulfil the duties of dramatic critic to a London morning journal, which not only aimed at being, but was by universal consent allowed to be, the most intellectual newspaper in Great Britain. Even if Mr. Campbell had, in the course of years, become an able dramatic critic, from having become a play-goer, and then been employed to write dramatic criticisms, I cannot believe that so intelligent and practical a man as Mr. Perry would have engaged him in that capacity on his arrival in London,—more especially as Mr. Perry, being himself a Scotchman, and from near the same part of Scotland as young Campbell, must have known the wretched state of the drama at that time in Scotland.

But in expressing my belief that the late Lord Chancellor Campbell, when Mr. Campbell, was never recognised as the regular dramatic critic of the *Morning Chronicle*, I wish it to be understood that I do not mean to say that he never, under any circumstances, wrote theatrical criticisms for that journal. He may have done so occasionally, just as I myself did for the same journal, although I had told the editor, Mr. Black, at the time, that I did not look on myself, for the reasons which applied in the case of the embryo Lord Chancellor, as at all competent for that kind of newspaper work. It pleased the Editor to think otherwise, and therefore I did it. To this matter I will refer hereafter. That Mr. Campbell, afterwards Lord Campbell, wrote at least one theatrical notice for the *Morning Chronicle*, is beyond all question; for on noticing, on one occasion, a revival of Shakspeare's "Romeo and Juliet," the afterwards Lord High Chancellor of England, though at that time plain Mr. Campbell, edified the readers of the *Morning Chronicle* with a theatrical criticism, which commenced in the following words:—"Last night a play called 'Romeo and Juliet' was performed at Drury Lane. The play is a very good one so far as it went, and was performed in a very creditable manner. But it is too long for these days; and we would recommend the author, before he puts it again on the stage, to cut it down!" I certainly should not think that such a specimen of dramatic criticism as this was likely, with such a man as Mr.

Perry as editor and proprietor of the *Chronicle*, to insure the permanency of Mr. Campbell's services as dramatic critic, if he ever was engaged in that capacity.

Other writers maintain that Mr. Campbell was engaged by Mr. Perry as a Parliamentary reporter for the *Morning Chronicle*. I am not in a position to contradict this, but I have met with no evidence that such was the fact. But if that was the chief purpose for which he was engaged, the fact is placed beyond doubt that he had to do general literary work besides. Nearly forty years afterwards I myself obtained an engagement on the same journal on those terms. Mr. Black, the then editor—of whom I shall have to say something presently—expressly stipulated, on engaging me as a Parliamentary reporter, that I should be available at all times and seasons for general literary work.

But a much greater man, in a literary point of view, than the embryo Lord Chancellor Campbell, was about this time a stated contributor to the *Morning Chronicle*,—I allude to Mr. Samuel Taylor Coleridge. I believe, but cannot speak positively on the point, that the two were together on that journal. The way in which Coleridge came to form a connexion with the *Chronicle* is curious, and ought to be mentioned as an act of justice to the memory of Mr. Perry. The fact is well attested—among others by Mr. Daniel Stuart, at that time proprietor of the *Morning Post*—that Coleridge, being in early life very

poor, as he was till the close of life, applied on one occasion anonymously to Mr. Perry for "the loan of a guinea to a distressed man," enclosing, as a sort of return, a brief poem. Perry not only at once complied with the applicant's request, but found him out, and afterwards received contributions from him, for which he was liberally remunerated.

I have spoken of the late Lord Chancellor Campbell as having been for several years on the literary staff of the *Morning Chronicle* under the régime of Mr. Perry; but he was not the only Campbell of an eminent name who was connected, in a literary capacity, with that journal. Thomas Campbell, author of "The Pleasures of Hope," also became, in the beginning of the century, a stated contributor to the columns of the *Morning Chronicle*. I have been unsuccessful in my endeavours to ascertain what was, in the first instance, the definite nature of the engagement which Mr. Perry made with Mr. Campbell. That which seems certain on this point is, that among the contributions there were to be political articles. It is equally certain that, as a political writer for a morning paper, he signally failed; and that after a certain time—I cannot say how long—he ceased to have anything to do with the leading article department of the *Morning Chronicle*. From that time, whatever it was, he only contributed poetical pieces to the columns of that journal. For these articles, during at least the first three years of the century, he received as his remuneration two



guineas apiece. We have his own authority for making this statement. Writing, on one occasion, to a friend on the subject, as appears from a letter which Dr. Beattie quotes in his "Life of Campbell," the latter says:—"I have sent through you twenty pieces of poetry to Perry. I think you may demand at least forty guineas for them all. Two guineas apiece is no extraordinary demand; but leave it to himself." At this time the *Morning Chronicle*, and several other papers too, had a poets' corner. A piece of original poetry, indeed, was a sort of feature in the newspapers of that day. Campbell, I ought here to remark, was a very vain, though amiable man in the ordinary intercourse of life. In the letter of his from which I have made a brief quotation, this feeling, which was constantly manifesting itself in his private correspondence, and when mixing in society, is visible. He says:—"I have resolved," referring to his poetical contributions to the *Morning Chronicle*, "to send but twenty pieces to Perry for a year's allowance. More than twenty pieces would make my name too hackneyed." I have again and again seen it stated that Mr. Campbell, in his earlier connexion with the *Morning Chronicle*, fulfilled the functions of a reporter in the gallery of the House of Commons. I have seen no evidence to substantiate this statement, and feel a thorough persuasion that it is wholly unfounded. From my slight personal acquaintance with the author of "The Pleasures of Hope," and having a thorough knowledge of what

the requirements of a Parliamentary reporter are, I unhesitatingly say that he did not possess the requisite qualifications for the office. But had the fact been as affirmed, I must have known it. When I was in the gallery as a reporter in 1833, there were several reporters who had been engaged in that capacity at the beginning of the century, when Campbell's connexion with the *Morning Chronicle* existed. There was Mr. Michael Nugent, of the *Times*, and there were various others whose names have escaped my recollection, who were reporters about the time in which Campbell must have been in the gallery, and they must have mentioned the fact if he ever had been there. But in addition to this, I was, when connected with the *Morning Chronicle* a year after this, in the habit of meeting with Mr. John Payne Collier night after night, he being on the same establishment, and having been a Parliamentary reporter for the *Times* so far back as 1809; yet none of these gentlemen ever spoke of Mr. Campbell as having been a reporter in the gallery, although the names of reporters who afterwards became literary celebrities were the frequent subjects of conversation. The statement, therefore, that the author of "The Pleasures of Hope" was in early life a Parliamentary reporter for the *Morning Chronicle*, may be safely dismissed as without foundation.

Among the distinguished men who were connected with the *Chronicle* at the end of the last century, there is every reason to believe, though there is no

direct proof of the fact, may be mentioned the name of Porson, probably the greatest Greek scholar that ever any age or country produced. In the year 1795 he married the widowed sister of Perry; and as the latter and Porson were on the most friendly terms, in conjunction with the nature, style, and mode of treatment of particular questions which were discussed in the *Morning Chronicle* at that period of its history, Mr. Barker, in his work, "Anecdotes of Porson," holds it to be all but certain that he was a contributor to that journal.

About the same period, though I have no data in my possession as to precise dates, Mr. James Mackintosh, afterwards Sir James Mackintosh, was one of the corps of contributors to the *Morning Chronicle*. He is said to have received a high remuneration for his articles. He did so from another paper called the *Oracle*, to which he was a liberal contributor at the time. The extent of his writings for the latter journal may be inferred from the fact, that being for some time paid by quantity, he received ten guineas in one week for productions from his pen. It is added, that on the following week he was offered and accepted a salaried engagement from the *Oracle*.

Some few years after this the *Morning Chronicle*, under Mr. Perry's editorship, had the benefit of the literary services of Mr. William Hazlitt. Mr. Hazlitt studied, in the first instance, with a view to the profession of an artist; but though he had made proficiency in his studies, he relinquished the idea, just

as he had reached his majority, of pursuing them any further, and turned his attention to general literature. It was in that capacity that he was engaged for the *Morning Chronicle*; and his beautiful essays, full of original thought, with his almost unrivalled writings on matters connected with the fine arts, together with his discriminative and polished criticisms on the dramatic novelties of the day,—contributed much to increase the reputation of the *Morning Chronicle*. It is worthy of being mentioned, that nearly a quarter of a century afterwards, his only son, called by the same name, was engaged by the same journal, for some years, as a Parliamentary reporter. Mr. Hazlitt is now a Registrar in the Court of Bankruptcy. He has carefully edited a beautiful edition, in several volumes, of his father's collected works.

But while giving Mr. Perry the credit which is due to him, I feel called from a sense of duty to allude to an instance in which he treated Mr. Hazlitt ungenerously; and in doing so, I quote the case as recorded by the late Miss Mitford, as I find it given in her "Life," published some years ago. "I have," says Miss Mitford, "just been reading Hazlitt's 'View of the Stage,'—a series of critiques originally printed in the different newspapers, particularly the *Chronicle* and the *Examiner*. This amusement, great as it always would have been, was very much heightened to me by recollecting so well the first publication of the best articles,—those on Kean in the *Morning Chronicle*. I was at Tavistock House [Perry's resi-

dence at the time], and very well remember the doleful visage with which Mr. Perry used to contemplate the long column of criticism, and how he used to execrate 'the fellow's stuff' for filling up so much of the paper in the very height of the advertisement season. I shall never forget his long face. It was the only time of the day that I ever saw it either long or sour. He had not the slightest suspicion that he had a man of genius in his pay—not the most remote perception of the merit of the writing—nor the slightest companionship with the author. He hired him as you hire your footman, and turned him off for a very masterly but damaging critique on Sir Thomas Lawrence, whom Mr. Perry, as one whom he visited and was being painted by, chose to have praised. Hazlitt's revenge was exceedingly characteristic. Last winter, when his 'Characters of Shakespeare' and his lectures had brought him into fashion, Mr. Perry remembered him as an old acquaintance, and asked him to dinner and a large party to meet him, to hear him talk, and to show him off as the lion of the day. The lion came, smiled and bowed, handed Miss Bentley to the dining-room, asked Miss Perry to take wine, said once 'Yes' and twice 'No,' and never uttered another word the whole evening. The most provoking part of this scene was that he was gracious and polite past all expression, a perfect pattern of mute elegance, a silent Lord Chesterfield; and his unlucky host had the misfortune to be very thoroughly enraged without anything to complain of."

Mr. Perry died in the year 1821, greatly lamented by a multitude of admirers. As an excellent man and an honest, able, consistent, and patriotic journalist, he was well worthy of the almost universal regret which was felt at his death, as he is of the reverence with which his memory is still regarded by all who are acquainted with newspaper history. Mr. Perry left at his death an ample provision for his somewhat large family.

In closing my notice of Mr. Perry, the reader will, I am sure, share my surprise when I mention that, considering its great reputation, the circulation of the *Chronicle* never was very high while he was its proprietor. As far as can be gathered from the accounts which have from time to time been rendered of the financial state of its affairs, its average circulation during the thirty years and upwards in which it was his property, did not exceed 2500 per day. A morning paper with so limited a circulation as that could not be supposed to be a great property. Yet the fact was established on Mr. Perry's death by his bankers' book, that in the year 1820—that which preceded his death—the profits were 12,000*l.* The only way in which these extraordinary profits of the *Chronicle* in that year can be accounted for is, that the price, sevenpence, on a paper of small size, afforded, after all deductions consequent on the stamp duty of fourpence—which was reduced by the discount of twenty per cent.,—the price of paper, and the remuneration of literary contributors, must have



yielded a profit of at least twopence-halfpenny per copy on each copy sold. The expense of printing, it must be remembered, was at this time a mere trifle compared with what it is now. So late as the year of Mr. Perry's death the cost of editing, reporting, printing, and all other expenses, was under 80*l.* per week. If, as I have assumed, the average sale of the *Chronicle* was 2500, during all Mr. Perry's time, and the profit on each paper was twopence-halfpenny, it will be seen that the weekly profits on the circulation alone must have approximated to the amount necessary to meet the expenses of the printers' bill. And such being the case, the sums received for advertisements were all clear profit. I have looked carefully over the file of the *Morning Chronicle* for the year 1820, the year before Mr. Perry died, and I have found that the advertisements during the period of which I am speaking, were numerous, and mostly of what is called a good-paying class. Supposing the average amount received for advertisements at the time by the *Chronicle* had been 40*l.* a day, or 240*l.* per week, that would be rather more than 12,000*l.* a year,—the profits found in Mr. Perry's cash-book at his bankers as having been made in the year 1820, the year before his death.

Some persons have said that towards the close of Mr. Perry's life, Mr. M'Culloch, author of the popular "Commercial Dictionary," was editor, for a brief period, of the *Morning Chronicle*. This is a mistake. Before and after Mr. Perry's death, Mr. M'Culloch

contributed articles on commercial subjects to the *Morning Chronicle*, just as he had at intervals for many years been a contributor to the *Edinburgh Review*. But there is all the difference in the world between being a frequent contributor to, and being the editor of, a journal.

Mr. John Black, who had been before a Parliamentary reporter for several years on the *Morning Chronicle*, succeeded Mr. Perry in the editorship of the paper, under the proprietorship of Mr. William Clement, who bought the *Chronicle* soon after Mr. Perry's death for the sum of 42,000*l.* Mr. Clement was at the same time the proprietor of the *Observer*, a Sunday paper, then and for many years afterwards a fine property. *Bell's Life in London* also belonged to Mr. Clement, and, though only but a few years established, had already become a commercially successful enterprise. Mr. Black became so noted a man in connexion with the morning metropolitan newspaper press, as to entitle him to especial notice. He was a Scotchman, and was born in Berwickshire. He was articled in an accountant's office in Edinburgh, with the view of following that profession. Being of an irritable and overbearing temper, and ready to take offence at times when none was intended, he is said to have sent no fewer than twelve challenges to fight a duel, to those by whom he fancied himself to be affronted, before he had reached his twenty-fourth year. Whether any of them, or how many of them, were accepted, is a point on which I have been unable

to obtain any reliable information ; but he afterwards did fight two duels, to which I shall by and by have to allude. Mr. Black, when about twenty-five years of age, came to London, the story being that he walked all the way to "The Great Metropolis"—a distance of four hundred miles ; and that on his reaching Charing Cross he had only threepence in his pocket. I cannot vouch for the accuracy of this incident in Mr. Black's career ; but there is certainly nothing improbable in it, considering that Mr. Black was a Scotchman. In manners and habits he sustained the character of his countrymen. He did so equally for industry, hardiness, and to use one of his favourite expressions, "boorishness of bearing." He was a remarkable man for the extent, variety, and accuracy of his learning generally, but especially in relation to the writings of original thinkers, and of eminent philosophers. He was especially fond of metaphysics, and could lay his hand at a moment's notice on the works of any one of our great metaphysicians,—Hobbes, Dugald Stewart, Dr. Thomas Brown, and others in our own country ; but he was even still more partial to the works of Leibnitz, Kant, and others of the German metaphysical school. His great mistake as editor of a daily newspaper was, that his leading articles had more of the qualities of elaborate essays, than of the dash and liveliness required in a morning paper. They were, indeed, much more adapted for quarterly reviews, than for an ordinary daily newspaper. When, too, he took up any question of the

day, he not only worked it threadbare, but positively hammered away at it long after it had been all but forgotten by the public. There are myriads of persons still alive who remember how he worked, for months together, without a day's intermission, on the evils of "an Unpaid Magistracy." The result may be inferred. There was a heaviness about the *Morning Chronicle* during Mr. Black's editorship, which, in the course of a few years, caused it to lose the prestige it had so long enjoyed. The consequence of that will be inferred with all confidence. Gradually the circulation dwindled down from between 3500 and 4000 copies per day, to 1500 or 1600, and it was carried on for years at a great loss. In 1834 the property was sold by Mr. Clement to Sir John Easthope for 16,500*l.* It improved considerably soon after it came into the hands of the latter, through the successful arrangements which he made to obtain early and accurate foreign intelligence, especially from Spain and Portugal, in both of which countries revolutions were at the time the order of the day. But the highest point of prosperity to which the *Morning Chronicle* ever attained at any period of its history, was caused by an accidental circumstance. In 1837 the *Times*, on a change of the Melbourne Ministry, identified itself with Conservative principles, and that circumstance contributed largely to an increased circulation of the *Morning Chronicle*.

But I am somewhat anticipating chronologically the state of things. Mr. Black had, in person, all the

blunt and bluff appearance of a thickset farmer. He was never, during the many years of his editorship, to be seen in the streets without being accompanied by a large mastiff, and a robust stick, which he himself called an honest, sturdy "cudgel," in his hand. So that between the two he might have travelled all the world over, without having the slightest fear of assault or of molestation in any of their diversified forms.

Mr. Black had many peculiarities which amused some of his friends while they vexed others. He not only always dressed in the plainest manner, but he had an insuperable objection to have his editorial sanctum kept tidy. This extended to the dusting of his books. As many of these were lying in heaps on the floor as were to be found on the shelves. The more dust they had about them the greater was their worth in his estimation. He sometimes pulled down a volume from his shelves to show me, as bearing on the subject on which we had been talking at the time, which, though it may have been comparatively modern, had all the appearance, from the accumulation of dust which adhered to it, of not having been disturbed in its resting place for many generations. If the subject of conversation chanced to be on the races of men,—which was his favourite subject, and which he took a special pleasure in introducing in conversation,—he would have gone on for hours together in the exposition of his views in relation to its diversified bearings, historical and social.

In connexion with the condition of Mr. Black's editorial apartment, Mr. Henry Hunt, at the latter part of his life the member for Preston, but before that better known in connexion with the memorable Manchester Massacre of 1819, convulsed with laughter a court of justice while a case for libel against the *Morning Chronicle* was proceeding. Mr. Hunt was a witness in the case, and he was asked the question whether he was personally acquainted with Mr. Black. The answer was in the affirmative. He was next asked whether he was ever in his editorial room? An affirmative answer was again returned. "Was the editorial sanctum splendidly furnished?" was the next question put to Mr. Hunt. "I could not say that it was," was the answer. "Will you give the jury some idea of its interior? What do you suppose would have been the value of the furniture?" continued the Counsel. "I should not think," was the answer, "the whole of the furniture would, if sold at an auction, have fetched more than sevenpence halfpenny." "Are you serious, Sir?" said the Counsel for the defence. "Remember, you are on your oath." "I do remember I am on my oath," said Mr. Hunt. "Do you then adhere to the statement that the whole of the furniture was not worth more than sevenpence halfpenny?" pursued the examining barrister. "I do." "Explain how you make that out." "Why," was Mr. Hunt's answer, "there was no furniture at all in the room, except a table and two chairs,—and, while the table would not have fetched sixpence, no



one would have given more than three-halfpence, at the utmost, for the two chairs together."

Mr. Black not only never mixed in society, but he scarcely ever visited, or received visits from personal friends. Mr. Lewis Doxat, editor of the *Observer*, who died in March last at the great age of ninety-eight, was for fifteen or sixteen years a sort of sub-editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, and as such was in the habit of seeing Mr. Black all that time every night; yet when the two papers ceased, in 1834, to belong to the same proprietors, and a severance took place of the official connexion between the two, Mr. Black never once called on Mr. Doxat during the nine remaining years that he continued editor of the *Chronicle*. This was all the more extraordinary, as not only were Mr. Black and Mr. Doxat friends who never had a word of misunderstanding together, but the offices of the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Observer* were, after the separation, nearly opposite each other in the Strand.

One of the most marked peculiarities in the character of Mr. Black, in connexion with books, was, that it was an essential part of his creed, that no book which he borrowed from a friend should ever be returned. I am sure that every one now living who knew him personally, as I did, will readily endorse this statement. I venture to say, and I do it with all confidence, that no one will be forthcoming who ever gave him a reading of any book, that ever got the work returned. When I first became acquainted with

him personally, on my joining the *Morning Chronicle* corps, we chanced to enter into conversation on subjects respecting the Highland clans of Scotland, and I happened to mention that among several rare works which were in my possession, in relation to the Gaelic clans of that country, I had a copy of "Shaw's History of the Province of Moray," which embraced a large portion of Invernesshire. He expressed a great wish to see the latter work, as he had often heard of it, but had never been able to get a sight of it. As I was, at the time, newly come to London, and had recently entered into a literary engagement on the *Morning Chronicle*, of which he was the editor, and over whose management he exercised supreme control, I was but too delighted to give him a loan of that work and several others, more or less relating to his favourite subject of the races of men. But I did so with the remark that I prized them highly because they were so rare as not to be had at any price. They were all to be returned in a week or two at the furthest, but none of them ever were so. But I had this satisfaction, that every time I chanced to meet Mr. Black for years afterwards, I not only got a seemingly sincere expression of regret that he should have been so neglectful as not to have returned them sooner, but a renewal of his promise, accompanied with a solemn assurance, that they would be returned "to-morrow;" but the "to-morrow" never came, and of course cannot now come, as he has for fifteen or sixteen years slept with his fathers. The truth was that Mr. Black never

could part with any books that ever came into his possession,—no matter by what means, or under what circumstances. He held them with a death-like tenacity of grasp. His coat, or even his shirt, he would have been ready to part with at any time to any man, but as for books that once came into his hands, they could never be wrenched from him.

Mr. Black prided himself on being a great physiognomist. He regarded himself as an unerring disciple of Lavater. The moment he saw a man he either conceived a great prepossession in his favour, or decided prejudice against him. One curious instance of this chanced to come under my personal cognizance. Two candidates, one an Irishman and the other a Scotchman, happened to be applicants at the same time for a vacant literary situation on the *Morning Chronicle*. The Irishman was a barrister, and as gentlemanly looking a man as ever trod the streets of London. The Scotchman had newly come from his native moors and mountains, and made no pretensions to what is called polished manners. Mr. Black saw them both by appointment,—the first being the Irish barrister. His confidence in his supposed unfailing accuracy in physiognomy, led him to say, without ceremony—for he never knew what ceremony was—that he did not meet the requirements of the vacant office. With his own countryman he entered into conversation, stated that he knew with what success he had commenced and conducted a newspaper in his native town, and only regretted that in-

stead of offering him an engagement to write on general subjects, literary, artistic, and theatrical, he could not engage him for the leading article department of the paper. The other said he would be but too happy to accept the engagement at Mr. Black's disposal, but thought it right to mention, that not having any experience in theatrical criticism,—there being in the provincial parts of Scotland nothing better, as he, being a Scotchman, well knew, in the histrionic way, than the theatrical performances of a few strolling players,—he might be disappointed with the character of his dramatic criticism. Mr. Black said he had no fear on the subject. But the other answered, that as he would not like to make an engagement to do certain things, in the doing of which he might not give satisfaction, he would prefer if, before they came to terms, Mr. Black would be kind enough to send him to whatever theatre the first new piece might be brought out in. Mr. Black rejoined, “Well, if you wish that, there is, curiously enough, a new piece called ‘The Beulah Spa,’ coming out to-night in which Madame Vestris and Mr. and Mrs. Keeley are the principal characters. Will you,” he added, “go there, and when the piece is over come here and write your notice of the piece?” The other assented, and wrote the criticism accordingly. Mr. Black expressed not only his approval, but his admiration of the notice, which the writer—having the most entire distrust in his qualifications for dramatic criticism—was afraid

was ironical until he saw what he had written—about half a column in length, and without the alteration of a single word—in the *Morning Chronicle* of the following day. He received a regular engagement on that day. The party alluded to has been very successful in connexion with the metropolitan press from that time till this, although many years have intervened; but had Mr. Black, confiding in his physiognomical principles, come to the same sudden unfavourable conclusion he did in relation to the other gentleman, he would, in all probability, have returned to his native town, and there lived and died comparatively unknown to the general public. The Scotch gentleman has always felt it his duty to say, that one important circumstance in favour of his being preferred to the Irish gentleman, was the fact that Mr. Black, though so learned in literature generally, knew nothing whatever of theatricals, never having been, as he used to boast, but once in a theatre in his life.

On Mr. Black's retirement from the editorship of the *Morning Chronicle*, in 1843, his friends ascertained that he had not saved anything on which to live, and therefore a few of them joined together to purchase an annuity for him. As he was then sixty years of age, having been born in 1783, he did not, with his frugal habits, require much to make provision for the remainder of his life. Mr. Walter Coulson gave him, at a nominal rent, a cottage and garden on his estate, near Birling, in Kent, where Mr. Black

lived in comparative comfort until his death about fifteen years ago.

Mr. Black was generally called in his day Dr. Black, the prevalent impression even among literary men, being, that the degree of LL.D. had been conferred upon him by one of our learned universities. This was an erroneous belief. He was first so dubbed derisively by Cobbett, in his weekly paper called the *Register*, and from the first time Cobbett called him Dr. Black, there was scarcely a week for many years afterwards that the same mock distinction was not given to Mr. Black in the columns of the *Register*. It was a curious fact, that though Mr. Black was almost daily attacked in some form or other in the columns of contemporary journals, Cobbett was the only assailant whose attacks annoyed him, but he was extremely sensitive to whatever Cobbett, who always signed his name to his articles, said about him. Viewing the distinction of "Doctor," in the light I have mentioned, he often looked upon the application of the term to him, even by friends who believed that he had duly received the honour from one of our universities, as an insult, and acted in many cases towards them in a manner which left no doubt in their minds, that he did regard it in the light of an affront. I was first introduced to Mr. Black in 1834, by Mr. Tom Hill,—a great celebrity in his way at that time in literary circles. This was in a great measure because he had been made, under the name of Mr. Hull, the hero of Theodore Hook's novel of "Gilbert Gurney," and because at eighty



years of age he looked as youthful as if he had been only in his teens. Theodore Hook, in seemingly serious terms, represented him as having been born in the time of the Revolution of 1688.

This Tom Hill was so intimate not only with Mr. Black of the *Chronicle*, but with nearly all the editors of the daily papers, that he is entitled, now that he has been for many years in his "long home," to a few words by way of perpetuating his memory. He was not only the "Mr. Hull" of Theodore Hook's "Gilbert Gurney," but the "Paul Pry" of Poole, so well known forty years ago as the author of that dramatic piece, and of "Little Pedlington," and other novels. He died at the age of eighty, "but he was," says the late Cyrus Redding, in his work entitled "Past Celebrities whom I have Known," "so fresh-coloured and vigorous that Horace Smith used to say, 'I cannot believe Hill is dead; I did not think he could die.'" Mr. Redding adds, "that Horace Smith happily described him as a fat, florid, round little man,—a sort of retired elderly cupid." I may add, from my own personal acquaintance with Tom Hill, as he was always called, that though not himself having the slightest connexion with newspaper journalism or authorship, he never knew what happiness was unless when in the society of newspaper editors or literary men. Some idea may be formed of the oddity of Mr. Hill's character when I mention that at his death he left 15,000*l.*, all his fortune, to Mr. Du Bois, a gentleman at that time well known

in the literary world of London. He assigned no other reason for giving Mr. Du Bois the preference to others than, that he used to go to dine with him at the "Jack Straw's Castle," at Hampstead.

On giving me the introduction to Mr. Black, he earnestly warned me against calling him Dr. Black, adding that if I did I was sure to fail in my application for the literary vacancy which had just occurred on the *Morning Chronicle*. I thanked Mr. Hill for the caution, adding that I really believed Mr. Black was an LL.D., and should consequently have called him Dr. Black. Being, however, warned against the mistake, I avoided it, and was fortunate in being selected from others to fill the literary vacancy on the *Morning Chronicle*. Even till this day, many literary men speak of the late Mr. Black as Dr. Black. Mr. Gruneisen did so twice over in a brief letter which he addressed to me as editor of a morning journal, at the time of Mr. Dickens's death. Mr. Gruneisen's letter related to the early connexion of Mr. Dickens with the *Morning Chronicle*.

I have referred in a previous page to the circumstance of Mr. Black's being a man who, in early life, was quick in resenting what he considered an affront, and to his readiness in "calling out" the party offending him. The same feeling existed until he had reached his fiftieth year; but I am not aware that more than two "affairs of honour," in the sense of fighting a duel, came off in consequence of misunderstandings between Mr. Black and others. One

of the two duels was with a gentleman in a government situation, and ended without any casualty on either side. The other was with Mr. Roebuck, and took place in 1835. Mr. Roebuck, in one of a series of weekly pamphlets which he was publishing at the time, applied the epithets "base" and "utterly disgraceful," to Mr. Black's conduct in reference to Mr. Goldsmid. Mr. Black called on Mr. Roebuck for a retraction of the words. Mr. Roebuck declined to give it. The challenge was given by Mr. Black and accepted by Mr. Roebuck. The latter received Mr. Black's fire, but fired himself in the air. An attempt was made by Mr. Black's second to get Mr. Roebuck to retract, but he refused. Shots were again fired, but without result. Eventually Mr. Black's second decided the affair should end.

During Mr. Black's editorship of the *Morning Chronicle* many men of great political reputation and literary ability wrote for it in its various departments. Mr. Albany Fonblanque was for a considerable time a writer of leading articles for its columns, but though his writings as editor of the *Examiner* were universally admired in that journal for their wit, their point, their brilliancy, they produced no impression whatever on the public mind, in the *Morning Chronicle*. In short his connexion with the latter journal was a failure. So was that of the Rev. W. J. Fox, at that time a popular Unitarian, and known as an eloquent agitator as a member of the Anti-Corn-Law League. His leading articles were finished in style, and were argumentative,

but they failed to attract attention. Yet his writings in the *Repository*, a monthly magazine which he conducted, and in the *Westminster Review*, were greatly admired for their pith and pungency. How often do we witness similar circumstances,—men who are pre-eminently successful as writers for weekly, monthly, or quarterly journals, and who yet utterly break down as writers for daily papers? As a theatrical critic, the *Morning Chronicle*, in Mr. Black's time, could boast of Mr. John Payne Collier,—a man who possesses a more thorough knowledge of the writings of Shakspeare than any other since the great dramatist's day. Mr. George Hogarth, a man of the highest reputation as a musical critic, was for many years engaged for the *Morning Chronicle*. He and the others I have mentioned, were all, at the same time engaged in different departments of that journal, when, thirty-five years ago, I also was engaged as a reporter and a literary writer in that journal.

## CHAPTER XII.

### PAST METROPOLITAN DAILY PAPERS.

#### THE MORNING CHRONICLE.—PART SECOND.

Mr. Charles Dickens's Connexion with the *Morning Chronicle*—Incidents in Mr. Dickens's Early Literary Career—Close of Mr. Black's Editorship—Changes in the Proprietorship of the *Morning Chronicle*—Its becoming a Puseyite and Peelite Paper—Mr. Sergeant Glover's Proprietorship—Mr. Stiff's Proprietorship—End of the *Morning Chronicle*.

BUT of all the distinguished literary men, whether known as authors of books or as writers for the newspaper press, that ever before, or since 1835-6, were connected with the *Morning Chronicle*, the name of Charles Dickens stands immeasurably the highest. As a good deal of misconception still exists in relation to the circumstances under which he formed, and for some years continued that connexion; and as everything appertaining to his earlier career possesses a deep and universal interest, I am sure I will be pardoned if, in order to state the facts of the case more clearly than they have hitherto been, I make a few slight digressions. On the day after Mr. Dickens's death, I wrote an article on his literary career, but chiefly with respect to its earlier history, in one of

the daily journals. What I have said has been transferred to various newspapers and literary periodicals, and in no one instance has the accuracy of a single statement I then made, been doubted, much less denied. It is everywhere believed that the earliest productions from his pen made their appearance in the columns of the *Morning Chronicle*; and that Mr. John Black, then editor of that journal, was the first to discover and duly appreciate the genius of Mr. Dickens. The fact was not so. It is true that he wrote "Sketches" afterwards in the *Morning Chronicle*, but he did not begin them in that journal. Mr. Dickens first became connected with the *Morning Chronicle* as a reporter in the gallery of the House of Commons. This was in 1835-36; but Mr. Dickens had been previously engaged, while in his nineteenth year, as a reporter for a publication entitled the *Mirror of Parliament*, in which capacity he occupied the very highest rank among the eighty or ninety reporters for the press then in Parliament. While in the gallery of the House of Commons, he was exceedingly reserved in his manners. Though interchanging the usual courtesies of life with all with whom he came in contact in the discharge of his professional duties, the only gentleman at that time in the House of Commons with whom he formed a close personal intimacy was Mr. Thomas Beard, then a reporter for the *Morning Herald*, and now connected with the newspaper press generally as furnishing the Court intelligence for the morning journals. The friendship



thus formed between Mr. Dickens and Mr. Beard so far back as the year 1832 was, I believe, continued till the death of Mr. Dickens.

It was about the year 1833-34, before Mr. Dickens's connexion with the *Morning Chronicle*, and before Mr. Black, then editor of that journal, had ever met with him, that he commenced his literary career as an amateur writer. He made his *début* in the latter end of 1834 or beginning of 1835 in the *Old Monthly Magazine*, then conducted by Captain Holland, an intimate friend of mine. The *Old Monthly Magazine* had been started more than a quarter of a century before, by Sir Richard Phillips, and was for many years a periodical of large circulation and high literary reputation—a fact which might be inferred from another fact, namely, that the *New Monthly Magazine*, started by Mr. Colburn under the editorial auspices of Mr. Thomas Campbell, author of the "Pleasures of Hope," appropriated the larger portion of its title. The *Old Monthly Magazine* was published at half-a-crown, being the same price as *Blackwood's*, and some other magazines are at the present day. It was, as I have said, in this monthly periodical—not in the columns of the *Morning Chronicle*—that Mr. Dickens first appeared in the realms of literature. He sent, in the first instance, his contributions to that periodical anonymously. They consisted of Sketches, chiefly of a humorous character, and were simply signed "Boz." For a long time they did not attract any special attention, but were generally spoken of in

newspaper notices of the magazine, as "clever," "graphic," and so forth.

It was in the year 1835 that Mr. Dickens became connected with the *Morning Chronicle*. I could not be mistaken as to the time, because I remember as well as if it had been but yesterday, that he came to it the Session after I quitted my connexion with that journal. I had the expectation of, and immediately received, an offer from another morning paper, to do a kind of literary work which was more to my taste than Parliamentary reporting,—which I never liked. Mr. Dickens was engaged by Mr. Black of the *Morning Chronicle* simply as a Parliamentary reporter, at a salary of five guineas a week; and a more talented reporter never occupied a seat in the gallery of either House of Parliament. And let me here remark, that literary abilities of a high order, with reporting capacity of a superior kind, are seldom found in conjunction. They were so, in the case of Mr. Dickens, in a measure which, I venture to say, they never were before in any other man since Parliamentary reporting was known.

But though Mr. Dickens was engaged solely as a reporter for the *Morning Chronicle*, he had not been connected in that capacity with that journal for many months, before he began to write "Sketches" for it. At that time Sir John Easthope started an *Evening Chronicle*, which was but a second edition of the morning paper, with any important intelligence which might have come to hand in the course of the day.

Instead of its being a fact, as generally stated, that Mr. Dickens was asked by Mr. Black to write "Sketches" for the *Evening Chronicle*—in which the great majority of those afterwards published in two volumes appeared—Mr. Dickens made the proposal himself. We have the proof of this under his own hand. In an Appendix to the "Life of Charles Dickens" by the author of the "Life of Thackeray," there is an extract from a letter written in the year 1835 to the late Mr. George Hogarth, with whom he was associated for some time at the *Morning Chronicle*, and who had been appointed to the editorship of the *Evening Chronicle*, on the eve of its being commenced. In this letter from Mr. Dickens to Mr. Hogarth, one of whose daughters he soon afterwards married, he says :—

As you begged me to write an original sketch for the first number of the new evening paper, and as I trust to your kindness to refer my application to the proper quarter, should I not be unreasonably or improperly trespassing upon you, I beg to ask whether it is probable that if I commenced a series of articles, under some attractive title, in the *Evening Chronicle*, its conductors would think I had any claim to some additional remuneration—of no great amount—for doing so. Let me beg you not to misunderstand my meaning. Whatever the reply may be, I promised you an article, and shall supply it with the utmost readiness, and with an anxious desire to do my best, which, I honestly assure you, would be the feeling with which I would always receive any request coming personally from yourself. I merely wish to put it to the proprietors—first, whether a continuation of light papers, in the style of my "Street Sketches," would be considered of use to the new paper; and secondly, if so, whether they do not think it fair and

reasonable that—taking my share of the ordinary reporting business of the *Chronicle* besides—I should receive something for the papers beyond my ordinary salary as a reporter.

This offer of Mr. Dickens was accepted, and he continued to write, for some time, “Sketches” for the *Evening Chronicle*. They generally occupied somewhat more than a column, in small type, and were afterwards republished in a separate form. He received no remuneration for his articles, as such, but got an addition of two guineas a week in consideration of them, under the general head of his salary as a reporter. The income, therefore, which he derived from his labours on the *Morning Chronicle* establishment, was seven guineas, instead of five. I have no doubt whatever that Mr. Black, at an early period of Mr. Dickens’s connexion with the *Morning Chronicle*, discovered his brilliant abilities, as a writer of “Sketches,” a number of which had previously appeared in several journals; but the credit of having brought Mr. Dickens before the world as an author was not due to Mr. Black. He had nothing to do with it.

It will be seen that so very modest was Mr. Dickens’s opinion of his talents when he made the proposal to Mr. Hogarth to write “Sketches” for the *Evening Chronicle*, that he only asked for “some additional remuneration—of course, of no *great* amount;” and on receiving the addition of two guineas weekly to his salary of five guineas as a reporter, he seems to have been quite satisfied. As he wrote always two—often, if I remember rightly, three—of these

“Sketches,” he never received more than a guinea for each of them. When he wrote three he only got fourteen shillings apiece.

Mr. Dickens still continued, and for some time afterwards, to discharge his duties as a Parliamentary reporter, and also occasionally to go into the country great distances to report speeches at important public meetings. His energy and judgment in making the necessary arrangements, as well as his ability as a reporter, often obtained for him the warmest commendations from his employers. He was one of the most rapid reporters of his day,—a fact which has led, in some instances, to much exaggeration in statements which have appeared on the subject. I have seen it confidently affirmed that, as a Parliamentary reporter, he has been known to write a column and a half of a speech in an hour. I am sure that neither in conversation nor in any of his private letters to friends did he ever himself say anything of the kind. I venture to affirm that such a feat of swift penmanship was never accomplished, either by Mr. Dickens or by any one else. I might go further and say, that in the existing mode of penmanship it never will. The thing is a mechanical impossibility. I am sure I will be borne out by all who have been employed in writing leading articles for the morning papers, when I say, that no one ever wrote a leading article of a column and a half in length, legible enough for the compositors to read, in an hour. Now every one knows that a column of a leading article, being in large type, and

what is called leaded, does not contain half the quantity of a column of the close small type matter in which Parliamentary reports appear. But besides this, there is another fact to be considered. A person writing a leading article, who is at no loss for ideas, has no occasion to pause for a single moment as he proceeds, whereas the reporter has to pause and look at his notes at every second or third sentence; and thus, in the course of writing a whole column, there must necessarily be a considerable loss of time. That Mr. Dickens, therefore, or anybody else, could write a column and a half of Parliamentary debates in an hour in a sufficiently legible hand for the printers to decipher, is, I repeat, at variance with the fact. I much doubt whether even a column has been written in an hour.

As everything, as I have before remarked, concerning the early literary career of Mr. Dickens possesses a special interest, and as many inaccurate statements relating to it have found their way into print, I will, I am sure, be permitted to state certain things bearing on the subject which accord with my own personal knowledge.

Early in 1836 the editorship of the *Monthly Magazine*, the adjective, "Old" having been by this time dropped, came into my hands, and in making the necessary arrangements for its transfer from Captain Holland—then, I should have mentioned, proprietor as well as editor—I expressed my great admiration of the series of "Sketches by Boz," which had appeared



in the *Monthly*, and said I should like to make an arrangement with the writer for a continuance of them under my editorship. With this view I asked him the name of the author. It will sound strange in most ears when I state, that a name which has for so many years filled the whole civilized world with its fame, was not remembered by Captain Holland. But he added, after expressing his regret that he could not at the moment recollect the real name of "Boz," that he had received a letter from him a few days previously, and that if I would meet him at the same time and place next day, he would bring me that letter, because it related to the "Sketches" of the writer in the *Monthly Magazine*. As Captain Holland knew I was at the time a parliamentary reporter on the *Morning Chronicle*, then a journal of high literary reputation, and of great political influence, he supplemented his remark by saying, that "Boz" was a parliamentary reporter; on which I observed, that I must in that case know him, at least by sight, as I was acquainted more or less with all the reporters in the gallery of the House of Commons.

Captain Holland and I met, according to appointment, on the following day, when he brought me the letter to which he had referred. I then found that the name of the author of the "Sketches by Boz" was Charles Dickens. The letter was written in the most modest terms. It was simply to the effect that as he (Mr. Dickens) had hitherto given all his contributions—those signed "Boz"—gratuitously, he would

be glad if Captain Holland thought his "Sketches" worthy of any small remuneration, as otherwise he would be obliged to discontinue them, because he was going very soon to get married, and therefore would be subjected to more expenses than he was while living alone, which he was, at this time, in Furnival's Inn.

It was not quite clear from Mr. Dickens's letter to Captain Holland, whether he meant he would be glad to receive any small consideration for the series of "Sketches," about a dozen in number, which he had furnished to the *Monthly Magazine* without making any charge,—or whether he only expected to be paid for those he might afterwards send. Neither do I know whether Captain Holland afterwards furnished him with any pecuniary expression of his admiration of the "Sketches by Boz" which had appeared in the *Monthly*. But immediately on receiving Mr. Dickens's letter, I wrote to him, saying that the editorship of the *Monthly Magazine* had come into my hands, and that, greatly admiring his "Sketches" under the signature of "Boz," I should be glad if we could come to any arrangement for a continuance of them. I concluded my note by expressing a hope that he would, at his earliest convenience, let me know on what terms per sheet he would be willing to furnish me with similar sketches every month for an indefinite period.

By return of post I received a letter from Mr. Dickens, to the effect that he had just entered into

an arrangement with Messrs. Chapman and Hall to write a monthly serial. He did not name the work, but I found in a few weeks it was none other than the "Pickwick Papers." He added, that as this serial would occupy much of his spare time from his duties as a reporter, he could not undertake to furnish me with the proposed sketches for less than eight guineas per sheet, which was at the rate of half a guinea per page.

I wrote to him in reply that the price was not too much, but that I could not get the proprietor to give the amount, because when the *Monthly Magazine* came into his hands, it was not in the same flourishing start it had once been. I was myself at this time getting ten guineas a sheet from Captain Marryat for writing for his *Metropolitan Magazine*, which was started by Thomas Campbell and Tom Moore, and which afterwards came into my hands both as proprietor and editor, and which, after conducting it for several years, I sold at the same price as I gave for it. I was also at this time getting at the rate of twenty guineas per sheet for my contributions to the *Penny Cyclopædia*.

Only imagine, then, Mr. Dickens offering to furnish me with a continuation, for any length of time which I might have named, of his "Sketches by Boz" for eight guineas a sheet, whereas, in little more than six months from that date, he could—so great in the interval had his popularity become—have got a hundred guineas per sheet of sixteen pages, from the proprietors of any of the leading periodicals of the day.

What I have thus stated will be found confirmatory of the moderate nature of Mr. Dickens's expectations in the matter of remuneration for his labours at this early period of his literary life, as contained in his letter to Mr. Hogarth. It will also be observed that not only was he at this time unknown to fame, but his name was not even generally known among the reporters in the gallery of the House of Commons, though nightly meeting them in the discharge of their and his professional duties.

Mr. Dickens still continued to go through the drudgery of parliamentary reporting; and, as will be seen presently, a circumstance occurred six months afterwards in connexion with his "Pickwick Papers," which must, for a few weeks, have filled his mind with apprehension, lest he should have to remain a reporter during life. The following narrative of incidents will bring this fact clearly before the mind of the reader.

The terms on which Mr. Dickens concluded an arrangement with Messrs. Chapman and Hall for the publication of the "Pickwick Papers," were fifteen guineas for each number, the number consisting of two sheets, or thirty-two pages; which was a rather smaller sum than that at which he offered, just at the same time, to contribute to the *Monthly Magazine*, then under my editorship.

For the first five months of its existence, Mr. Dickens's first serial, the "Pickwick Papers," was a signal failure, and this notwithstanding the fact that

Mr. Charles Tilt, at that time a publisher of considerable eminence, made extraordinary exertions, out of friendship for Messrs. Chapman and Hall, to insure its success. He sent out on what is called sale or return, to all parts of the provinces, no fewer than fifteen hundred copies of each of the first five numbers. This gave the "Pickwick Papers" a very extensive publicity, yet Mr. Tilt's only result was an average sale of about fifty copies of each of the five parts. A certain number of copies sold, of course, through other channels, but commercially the publication was a decided failure. Two months before this Mr. Seymour, the artist, died suddenly, but left sketches for two parts more, and the question was then debated by the publishers whether they ought not to discontinue the publication of the serial. But just while the matter was under their consideration, Sam Weller, who had been introduced in the previous number, began to attract great attention, and to call forth much admiration. The press was all but unanimous in praising "Samivel" as an entirely original character, whom none but a great genius could have created; and all of a sudden, in consequence of "Samivel's" popularity, the "Pickwick Papers" rose to an unheard-of circulation. The back numbers of the work were ordered to a large extent, and of course all idea of discontinuing it was abandoned.

No one can read these interesting incidents without being struck with the fact that the future literary

career of Mr. Dickens should have been for a brief season placed in circumstances of so much risk of proving a failure; for there can be no doubt that had the publication of his serial been discontinued at this particular period, there was little or no probability that other publishers would have undertaken the risk of any other literary venture of his. And he might consequently have lived and died, great as his gifts and genius were, without being known in the world of literature. How true it is that there is a tide in the affairs of men!

By the time the "Pickwick Papers" had reached their twelfth number—that being half the numbers of which it was originally intended the work should consist—Messrs. Chapman and Hall were so gratified with the signal success to which it had now attained, that they sent Mr. Dickens a cheque for 500*l.* as a practical expression of their satisfaction with the sale. The work continued steadily to increase in circulation until its completion, when the sale had all but reached 40,000 copies. In the interval between the twelfth and concluding number, Messrs. Chapman and Hall sent Mr. Dickens several other cheques, amounting in all to 3000*l.*, in addition to the fifteen guineas per number which they had engaged at the beginning to give him. It was understood at the time that Messrs. Chapman and Hall made a clear profit of 20,000*l.* by the sale of the "Pickwick Papers," after paying the author altogether nearly 4000*l.*

Probably there are few instances on record in the



annals of literature in which an author rose so rapidly to popularity, and attained so great a height in it as Mr. Dickens. His popularity was all the more remarkable because it was reached while yet a mere youth. He was incomparably the most popular author of his day before he had attained his twenty-sixth year; and what is even more extraordinary still, he retained the distinction of being the most brilliant author of the age until the very hour of his death,—a period of no less than thirty-five years.

It was not till the brilliant success, as described above, of the “*Pickwick Papers*” had been assured, which it was immediately after the number appeared in which Sam Weller was introduced,—that Mr. Dickens severed his connexion as reporter with the newspaper press. But first I ought to state, that before his retirement, Mr. Black, thinking he might prove as able a writer of leading articles as he had by this time shown himself to be gifted as a writer of works of imagination, asked him to contribute to the leading columns of the *Morning Chronicle*. Mr. Dickens did so, but it was soon discovered that he possessed no special fitness for that kind of newspaper duty. Nor was it others only who made this discovery: he himself soon found that the writing of leading articles was not his vocation, and accordingly he lost no time in ceasing to employ his pen in that description of newspaper work.

Mr. Black, on closing his editorial connexion of more than twenty years with the *Morning Chronicle* in

1843, was succeeded by Mr. O'Doyle, who had been a Foreign Correspondent on the paper, and had lately become son-in-law of Sir John Easthope. Soon after that, and the paper decreasing in prosperity, both as regards circulation and advertisements, while the expenses were increasing, Mr. O'Doyle accepted a government appointment at 1000*l.* a year in connexion with some poor-law commission, and relinquished the editorship of the *Morning Chronicle*. Soon after this, Sir John Easthope sold the paper to the late Duke of Newcastle, Mr. Gladstone, and Lord Herbert, then Mr. Sidney Herbert, who confided the editorship to the late Mr. Cook, who afterwards edited the *Saturday Review*, and conducted it till his death a few years ago. The *Morning Chronicle*, under its new proprietors and editorship, became the organ of the Peel party in politics, and of the Puseyite party in the Church in religion. Soon after the paper came into the hands of the parties I have named, the National Exhibition of 1851 took place, and hoping that by making that great novelty of world-wide interest the means of giving a mighty impulse to their journal, they resolved to devote an amount of space, regardless of expense, to an account of everything connected with it, which would surpass the *Times* and all the other morning papers. In this they succeeded, by a series of supplements containing able and elaborate descriptions of objects in the Exhibition, and copious reports of whatever related to it; but commercially the experiment was a signal failure. At

first the novelty somewhat increased the circulation, and brought a few more advertisements, chiefly of the objects in the Exhibition which they had commended, but in a few weeks the "Exhibition Supplements" lost their attraction. They were pronounced heavy, and at the close of the Exhibition year the proprietors found that their losses on the journal for the twelve months were no less than 15,000*l.* Still they proceeded, losing on an average each year from 10,000*l.* to 12,000*l.* till 1854, when they sold the paper to the late Sergeant Glover for 7500*l.*,—stipulating that he should engage, for a period of three years, to conduct it on the same Peelite principles in politics and Puseyite principles in religion as before. In return for this they entered into a written agreement to give Mr. Glover 3000*l.* each of those years.

These circumstances in connexion with the history, at this period, of the *Morning Chronicle*, have not only not before been made public, but they were known only to a very few private friends of the several parties. I chanced to become acquainted with them from the fact of Mr. Glover calling on me on two occasions to offer me the editorship of the paper, engaging as an inducement that my authority should be supreme,—even over his own. He went at great length into details at which I have only glanced. I declined the offer of the editorship, preferring to remain editor of the morning journal with which I was then and had been editorially connected for many years.

Soon after the *Morning Chronicle* came into Mr.

Sergeant Glover's hands, he made an arrangement with the Government of Louis Napoleon to become the strenuous and daily supporter of the Imperial régime, in return for which he was not only to receive an important and lucrative concession for a telegraphic line of communication over a great part of France, but certain sums of money of large amount. The Imperial Government, however, failed to fulfil their engagement as regarded the telegraphic concession, and though he received several thousand pounds for his advocacy of Imperialism in the *Morning Chronicle*, yet he was not satisfied with that amount,—while he complained energetically to the French Government of the breach of their covenant with him in the matter of the telegraphic concession. The result was a quarrel between Mr. Glover and Imperialism, and he then published to the world the fact that the identification of the *Morning Chronicle* with the dynasty of Louis Napoleon had almost commercially ruined the paper. Actions were brought by him in the French Courts to recover sums which he maintained were due to him by the French Government, and also for damages for the breach of their engagements in the matter of the telegraphic concessions; but they were unsuccessful, and Mr. Glover then disposed of the paper to Mr. Stiff, at the time proprietor of the *London Journal* and other publications of the cheap class. Mr. Glover, during the few years of his proprietorship, had a succession of editors, but none of them were men of any note. Mr. Stiff, soon

after becoming possessed of the *Morning Chronicle*, reduced the price from threepence to a penny ; but the experiment did not succeed. The whole thing, on the contrary, proved a disastrous speculation. In two or three years the *Morning Chronicle*, after an existence of upwards of ninety years, was discontinued, and as the records of the Bankruptcy Court showed soon after, not a day too soon ; for it was proved in that Court that during the last year of Mr. Stiff's proprietorship, and the last of the paper's existence, the losses were not less than 12,000*l.*

## CHAPTER XIII.

### PAST METROPOLITAN DAILY PAPERS.

#### THE MORNING HERALD—THE SUN.

Historical Notices and Anecdotes in Connexion with both these Journals.

BESIDES the two journals I have here mentioned, there were other two, both evening papers, which have within the last few years made their exit from the newspaper world. But there is nothing in either of them which requires a special notice. One was the *Express*, which being an offshoot from the *Daily News* partook, politically and otherwise, essentially of its character. The other was the *Glowworm*; but it did not embrace all the features which are necessary to constitute a newspaper, in the more comprehensive sense of the term. The *Express* promised well for the first few years of its existence, but soon began to fall off in circulation, and died after a life extending to eight or nine years. The *Glowworm* only lived four or five years.

The next of the past Metropolitan daily papers which has a claim on our attention is the *Morning Herald*. It has not long left the world, having been among us until 1869. It was started in the year 1780,



not in 1782, as stated by some writers on the Newspaper Press. Its originator was a Rev. Henry Bate, who had been previously editor of the *Morning Post*, but having quarrelled with some of those who were associated with him in the latter journal, he started the *Morning Herald*, in opposition to it, which he brought out on Liberal principles. This Rev. Mr. Bate was rector of a small church, with a limited living, at Smallridge, Essex, but being fond of fashionable society, he came to reside in London, where he not only wrote largely for the *Morning Post*, but became author of a number of plays. His constant attendance at theatres showed that he deemed "the boxes," not the pulpit, his proper place. He was a very excitable man, and was consequently often involved in personal quarrels, which in several instances ended in duels.

Yet this erratic clergyman and editor having defended in the *Morning Herald*, the Prince of Wales of that period, when his extravagant habits and immoral conduct were assailed alike in Parliament and out of it, he obtained through the combined influence of the Prince and the Duke of Clarence—afterwards respectively George IV. and William IV.—a lucrative Church living. This was in 1805, and through the same royal influence he received a baronetcy in 1812. Sir Henry Bate Dudley, who took the latter name in compliance with the will of a friend who left him a large fortune, lived twelve years to enjoy his new honours, having died at Cheltenham in 1824. But

though giving the tone to the politics of the *Morning Herald* and writing much for it, he was not all these years what is called "the conducting editor;" for a short time only elapsed after the commencement of the *Morning Herald* before its editorship was confided to Mr. Alexander Chalmers; but the exact date of his appointment to that office, and the length of time he remained in it, are points on which I am unable to furnish any information. Mr. Chalmers was a native of Aberdeen, and youngest son of Mr. James Chalmers, who was the originator and first proprietor of the *Aberdeen Journal*, which was started in 1745, two days after the battle of Culloden, and was the first newspaper to give an account of that battle,—one of the greatest in its results; for it completely crushed the rebellion got up by the friends of the Pretender. The *Aberdeen Journal* not only still exists, after the lapse of more than a century and a quarter, but is as vigorous and prosperous as ever. What may be deemed still more surprising is the fact that, amidst all the changes since then of newspaper proprietorships, it is still in the possession of the same family. Two great-grandsons of the projector are now the sole proprietors. Mr. Alexander Chalmers, who was one of the earliest editors of the *Morning Herald*, was shortly before, or soon after, connected in a literary capacity with the *General Advertiser*, the *St. James's Chronicle*, and the *Morning Chronicle*. He was also a voluminous writer on subjects relating to general literature. His best known and most highly

appreciated work, is his "General Biographical Dictionary," which is equally noted for the accuracy and variety of its information, and the comprehensiveness of its plan. It extends to no less than thirty-two octavo volumes. Mr. Chalmers was for many years editor, amongst other periodicals, of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. He died in 1834, at the advanced age of seventy-five. It is a curious fact that though he had been for more than half a century so near to his native place, as London, he never returned to Aberdeen,—not even to pay a few days' visit to it,—thus giving, so far as he was individually concerned, a confirmation to the Englishman's joke at the expense of Scotchmen, that "They never go back again."

So little is known of the early history of the *Morning Herald*, that beyond what I have stated, I have not been able to learn anything worth recording, except the fact that towards the close of last century the boldness and independence of the *Herald* led to a number of actions for libel being brought against it. But important and exciting as some of these were, there were none that excited so much interest as the one which was brought against it by Mr. Pitt, in 1786, while he was Prime Minister. The ground on which Mr. Pitt brought his action was, that he had been charged with gambling in the funds. He represented this as a most serious charge against a Minister of the Crown, especially against the First Minister,—and so it undoubtedly was, especially if

any one had given any credit to it. But no one did. Pitt was a man wholly incapable of taking advantage of his position as Premier to turn exclusive intelligence which he received in that capacity, to his personal advantage by operating in the public funds. However, he laid the damages at no less than 10,000*l.* The verdict of the jury, which was only for 150*l.*, showed that neither the public nor the jury believed for a moment that there was the shadow of a foundation for the imputation. Yet, notwithstanding the attention which these actions for libel attracted to it, it had not, half a century ago, any reputation or circulation worthy of the name. Its daily sale did not then much exceed 1200 copies, and but for the fair show of advertisements which it was fortunate enough to present, it would have been discontinued in 1820. But soon after that year the *Morning Herald* began to attract attention. There were two circumstances which co-operated together to turn the tide of prosperity. The first was the introduction of a new way of reporting the police cases at Bow Street. The author of this novelty in reporting the Bow Street cases was a Mr. Wight, and the new feature was a gross exaggeration, yet cleverly done, of whatever grotesque or ludicrous cases came before the magistrate. The fact that the reports of these cases which appeared in the *Morning Herald*, were so different from those which were published in all the other journals, though based on the same leading facts,—led people to the conclusion, not that the reporter was guilty of

a gross exaggeration in his description of what took place in the court, but that the other reporters were deficient in the descriptive faculty ; and that consideration raised the reputation of the paper. These humorous reports of the *Herald* were copied into the provincial papers, and were there read with so much mirthful enjoyment that instead of waiting for such weekly supplies of the laughter-inspiring reports which appeared daily in a London morning journal, small parties clubbed together—the price of the paper being then sevenpence—and ordered the *Herald* for themselves. The frequenters, too, of public houses and coffee houses, both in town and country, almost demanded that the paper should be “taken in,” and the *Herald* being accordingly ordered, there immediately followed a notification in the window of each of these “refreshment houses :”—“The *Morning Herald* Taken in Here.” In this way the *Morning Herald* rose from its lowest state to one of comparative prosperity with a rapidity which had then no precedent in the experience of any morning journal. I have been assured, indeed, that in little more than a year its circulation increased from something over 1200 copies per day to 3600 copies. The circulation had thus been trebled in that short time. A selection was made from these reports, abounding though they manifestly did in the quality of caricature, and published in a volume, with illustrations by George Cruikshank, under the title of “Mornings at Bow Street ;” and as this volume had a large sale, going through many editions, that again

helped to advance the circulation of the *Herald*. It attracted besides an increased number of advertisements. At last, however, seeing that the reporter's account of cases before the court had become so distorted for the purpose of humorous effect, and that the facts were so shrouded in the drapery of burlesque as to be barely discernible, if discernible at all,—the magistrate interposed his authority in the interests of truth and the dignity of the magisterial bench, and prohibited the further publication of any similar reports of the proceedings in his court.

But before this took place, the *Morning Herald* had received the full benefit of Mr. Wight's reports. Nor was he without his individual reward for the service he thus rendered to the journal. He was, before long, in addition to the handsome salary which he was allowed, taken into partnership with the other proprietors, and soon after received the further reward of being appointed editor of the *Morning Herald*.

Nearly contemporary with this cause of increased prosperity to the *Herald*, there was a second, to which I have referred. At this time the property of the *Herald* was divided into sixteen shares, which were held, in greater or less numbers, by several proprietors. Mr. Thwaites, however, held a majority of the shares, just as it is well known Mr. Walter does of the *Times*. Of course that gave Mr. Thwaites a preponderance of influence in the politics and general management of the paper; but a Mr. Glassington, who held, if my information be not at fault, the next



largest number of shares, having quarrelled with Mr. Thwaites, threw the *Morning Herald* into Chancery. By way of revenge, he and a majority of the proprietors who concurred with him, determined on expending all the profits on improving the paper in various ways, so as that Mr. Glassington should not receive a fraction of them. The manager increased the number of Parliamentary and law-court reporters, established correspondents in the leading provincial towns in this country, and also appointed correspondents in all the leading capitals of Europe. The necessary result of thus sparing no expense, however great, in conducting the paper, was so marked an improvement in it, that no one could fail to perceive it. As a natural consequence, the *Herald* increased rapidly in circulation, until it actually surpassed that of the *Times*, which before this had been considerably above that of each of the other morning papers. The official stamp returns of 1828 give the circulation of the *Morning Herald* that year, as 1000 copies per day above that of the *Times*. But a change in the relative extent of the circulation of the two papers took place in the following year, and went on increasing until, in two years afterwards, the *Times* circulation was 11,000, while that of the *Herald* was under 10,000 copies. And from that time till its discontinuance—a year and a half ago—the circulation of the *Morning Herald* slowly declined, with the exception of a temporary increase caused by exceptional circumstances, while that of the *Times* increased at a

rapid rate, until it has reached the enormous circulation—for a paper published at three pence—of, in round numbers, 70,000 copies daily. The *Herald*, at the prosperous period of its history of which I have been speaking, was not only conducted with great spirit, and literally regardless of expense, but its thorough independence of party conduced very considerably to its prosperity. It proved its independence and impartiality on all the exciting party questions of that period, by being to-day with the Whigs and to-morrow with the Tories. But on the advent of the Melbourne Ministry, it assumed an attitude of systematic opposition to that Administration, and grounded its hostility on recognised Tory principles. From that time until the close of its existence, the *Herald* closely identified itself with Conservative principles.

The *Herald* possessed a greater amount of moral courage in relation to the law of libel than any of its contemporaries. In its earlier history, it boldly exposed abuses, without fear of the rigorous law of libel, even after it had had painful experience of the severity of that law. For some years the expenses it had to pay annually in connexion with proceedings under the libel law were ascertained to average 4000*l*. And here it is but due to the memory of a man who for more than thirty years has slept with his fathers, to mention one of the most noble deeds ever done in relation to actions for libel brought against the newspaper press. Mr. Alderman Scales,

at that time a well-known man in the metropolis generally, as well as in the City of London, had, in one of his many speeches, both on civic and political questions, made some very strong remarks, supposed to be libellous, on a political opponent, whose name I do not remember. The party, feeling himself aggrieved, immediately brought an action for damages against the *Herald*, laying the damages at 1000*l.*,—taking no notice of Alderman Scales, who had made the inculpated speech. The moment the fact came to the knowledge of Alderman Scales, he sent a cheque for 1000*l.* to the proprietors of the *Herald*, with a note to the effect, that any further amount, should any further sum be necessary to bear them harmless, would be at once remitted to them. This was a noble act, and ought to live in journalistic history. It is not often that newspaper proprietors have had to record deeds of equal generosity.

Soon after this it was well understood that the *Morning Herald* was for sale, and there were various reports in circulation in the newspaper world relative to parties alleged to have become its purchasers. For a considerable time it was confidently stated, and very generally believed, that the late Lord Ashburton, then Mr. Alexander Baring, the millionaire merchant, had become its sole proprietor. Even the price—75,000*l.*—which he was said to have paid for it, was named. This report and belief may have been grounded on the fact that Mr. Baring's sentiments, both on political and monetary questions, were fre-

quently expounded and faithfully advocated in the *Herald*; but there was no ground for the statement—for it was not always given as a report—that he had, or intended having, the slightest pecuniary interest in that journal. Mr. Thwaites continued managing conductor of the paper, and also wrote many leading articles for it,—which managers of morning papers rarely do—until his death, which took place, if my memory does not mislead me, in 1834 or 1835. Still the circulation continued to decrease, chiefly owing to the rapidly rising reputation and correspondingly great increase in the circulation of the *Times*. The bulk of the property of the *Herald* continued in his family for many years after Mr. Thwaites's death; and as each succeeding year saw the circulation falling, there was of course a proportionate diminution in the value of the property. In the year 1835 the circulation, which seven years before had been 10,000 copies daily, had dwindled down to 7000. Matters continued to go on with a still decreasing circulation, and an ever increasing falling off in the amount of the profits, till either 1843 or 1844, when the paper was sold to Mr. Edward Baldwin, whose father had been a newspaper proprietor for half a century, while he himself was proprietor of the *Evening Standard*,—at that time a valuable property, as well as enjoying the reputation of being a very ably conducted journal on the Tory side of politics.

One of the first things which Mr. Baldwin did on

his becoming proprietor of the *Morning Herald*, was to engage what he believed to be the greatest talent he could obtain for the paper. That was a wise resolve, provided he took care not only to get great literary talent, but the kind of talent most adapted for a morning newspaper,—always, of course, remembering that gold may be bought too dear, and that therefore there were limits to the price at which he would be justified in purchasing the commodity which he sought to obtain. He generously erred in both respects. He did not purchase the right article for his purpose. He estimated the worth of particular writers for the *Morning Herald* by their literary reputation. With the numerous instances before him of men of great literary reputation, such as S. T. Coleridge, Charles Lamb, Thomas Campbell, John Galt, not to mention others, who had failed as newspaper editors or writers, literary reputation was with him the great qualification for editing the *Morning Herald*, or being the principal leader-writers for it. And then he paid them extravagant sums for their services. There could be but one consequence of this. For some time there was a great loss on the paper, and but for the occurrence of an entirely unexpected, and therefore exceptional class of circumstances, there would have been, before long, a result which it is needless to name. Owing, however, to these circumstances, to which I shall briefly advert, the *Morning Herald* became a second time a valuable property. This was in the year 1845. In that year, as many are old enough to

remember, there was one of those accesses of wild speculation which usually alternate with seasons of panic. There was then a perfect mania in favour of railway companies, and so great was the influx of long advertisements of new companies, that the *Morning Herald* had sometimes a sufficient number to require not only a second double sheet, but a supplement of four pages. This made the paper of each day on which this occurred, consist of twenty pages, or 120 columns. As these advertisements were charged at what was then a high rate—one shilling per line, the charge for ordinary advertisements being sixpence per line—it is a well attested fact that Mr. Baldwin made 3000*l.* clear profit per week for a succession of weeks. This state of things lasted, with some modifications, for three or four months, and then there came the memorable railway panic, when the mania for forming new public companies suddenly and completely collapsed. Mr. Baldwin, fondly imagining that the state of prosperity which had lasted for nearly half a year would be perpetuated for an indefinable period, conducted the establishment of the *Morning Herald* in the most extravagant manner. Instead of paying the contributors of leading articles two guineas each as before—and which was the general rate of remuneration for that class of articles, the *Times*, however, never paying less than five guineas—Mr. Baldwin raised the terms to five guineas. At the same time he increased the pay of the Parliamentary reporters from five guineas to



seven guineas per week. But the increased expenditure in these two literary departments was not the only result of the sudden and surprising influx of prosperity caused by the railway mania of 1845-6. Matters in India began to wear an alarming aspect. There were then incipient symptoms, not to be mistaken, of that disaffection to this country which afterwards practically developed themselves in the Sepoy rebellion; and with a view to anticipate the *Times* and all other papers in ample and accurate information from India, Mr. Baldwin purchased, at a high price, a splendid steam-vessel, which he kept at Calais, with the steam constantly up, for several hours before the India mail was expected from Marseilles, so as to be ready to start at the very moment the mail arrived. This created a great sensation at the time, but it was only of brief duration. The collapse of the railway mania, with the consequent corresponding diminution of the profits of the paper, put an end to the steam packet scheme, but not until from 15,000*l.* to 20,000*l.* had been expended on it. The same causes imposed on Mr. Baldwin the necessity of recurring to the previous rate of payment to the Parliamentary reporters and writers of leading articles,—a fact which made them all regret that ever the increased rate of remuneration had taken place, because, never doubting that it would be permanent, they had naturally enough correspondingly increased their domestic expenditure. As several other morning journals felt con-

strained to increase the remuneration of services to the same extent as the *Morning Herald* had done, they also, after a brief period, returned to the former salaries of five guineas per week, which, with some very rare individual exceptions, consequent on special circumstances, have been ever since then the standard rate of remuneration which reporters receive for their arduous and responsible labours.

Mr. Baldwin's affairs became so deeply involved a few years after the period of which I have been speaking, that it was found necessary to throw them into the Court of Bankruptcy. The result was that both the *Morning Herald*, and the *Standard* at that time an evening paper—both published at fourpence, the penny stamp duty being then in existence—were ordered to be sold by the Court. They were both bought by Mr. James Johnson, who for many years held an official appointment in the Bankruptcy Court, but which he resigned on becoming the proprietor of the two journals, feeling that to make them an improved property it would be necessary for him to devote his intelligence, energies, and abilities exclusively to them. In the course of some time the *Standard* was transformed into a morning paper, and the price reduced to twopence. But any particulars regarding the changes which the *Standard* has undergone under Mr. Johnson's proprietorship and management, will more properly be narrated under its own title, when I come to speak of the evening papers.

From this time little more of interest remains to be told illustrative of the history of the *Morning Herald*. It pursued the even tenor of its way till the end. The *Telegraph* had started at twopence, and came down in a short time to a penny,—with what success shall be told hereafter. The *Standard* too adopted the penny price; so did the *Daily News*; while the *Star* started at the price of a penny. Still, the *Herald* remained unmoved. It never, till the last, reduced its price. People wondered that Mr. Johnson should have retained the price of one paper at threepence,—the penny stamp being by this time abolished—while he reduced the other to a penny. It was a thing they could not understand,—more especially as the *Standard* at a penny, having been much enlarged in the meantime, necessarily contained a very greatly increased quantity of new matter, in addition to everything of interest given in the *Morning Herald*. But Mr. Johnson understood what he was about; and the result showed that he was a far-seeing man. Had he reduced the *Morning Herald* to the same price as the *Standard*, the probability is, that both would be sufferers from the rivalry in price and matter between them. But he saw that by continuing the *Morning Herald* at threepence, while only charging a penny for the *Standard*, the result would be to attract all the greater attention to the latter, and give a powerful impulse to its circulation; while the former paper, being got up at a comparatively trifling expense, in consequence of having all its

matter, with the exception of the leading articles, transferred from the *Standard* to its columns, Mr. Johnson continued for many years to derive a profit from it. But with the lapse of time both the circulation and the advertisements continued to decrease, until the paper ceased to be a paying property, and then, on the last day of 1869, it was discontinued, after it had attained the venerable age of ninety years.

Mr. Johnson had in the meantime seen the success of his plans in the establishment of the *Standard* as a splendid property, with every probability of its continuing to be so for an indefinite period to come.

To those daily papers which once held a prominent place in the political journalism of the country, but which have passed away from among us, I have now to add the decease of the SUN. As an evening paper it ceased to shine in February last. It rose in the year 1792, the same year as that in which the *Courier* commenced, which for nearly half a century was its rival. And from the first evening on which the *Sun* shed its light on the political world, it never ceased to appear early in the evening, until it was extinguished on the 28th of February last,—almost a period of eighty years. Few papers, perhaps none, can boast of an origin, so far as high social position is concerned, such as the *Sun*. To whom does the reader suppose its parentage is to be attributed? To none other than the Right Hon. William Pitt, son of the great Lord Chatham, and that too when Mr. Pitt was Prime Minister. Of course, the *Sun*,

when it rose on the newspaper horizon, was a Tory paper,—the modern word “Conservative” never having been heard of then. But the character of its politics, had there been no other evidence on the subject, might have been inferred, with all safety, from the fact that Mr. George Rose, a true specimen of a Scotchman, was its first editor. He held a high position in the Treasury, and consequently had no right, any more than he had any disposition, to have a political opinion of his own. As editor of the *Sun*, he was just as much a clerk to Pitt, as he was in the Treasury. Afterwards we find Mr. George Rose elevated to Sir George Rose. Who succeeded him as editor of the *Sun* is more than I can tell; but in the course of years, though under what circumstances I do not know, the *Sun* abjured its Toryism, and became the advocate of Liberalism, in which character it continued till it ceased to shine.

The *Edinburgh Review*, in an article on the London Newspaper Press, about half a century ago, sarcastically said of the *Sun*, “It daily *appears*, but never *shines*.” This was not always true of that journal, as will be seen from some of the statements which I am about to make. Men of great literary capacity have been connected with the *Sun*, either as editors or regular contributors, during its prolonged career. Among the earliest of the contributors to the *Sun*—at any rate of whom we have any record—was Dr. Wolcot, the “Peter Pindar” of his day. Of Dr. Wolcot I shall have something to say in my notice of the *Anti-*

*Jacobin.* Mr. William Jerdan, founder, and for more than a quarter of a century editor, of the *Literary Gazette*,—the precursor of weekly publications of the *Athenæum* class,—was for some time one of the editors of the *Sun*. This was about 1815 or 1816. He was also part proprietor with several others. Some of these having disposed of their shares, Mr. John Taylor, author of “Monsieur Tonson,” purchased a sufficient number of these to give him, with the interest in the paper which he held before, a co-equality of power—at least he thought so—with Mr. Jerdan. The latter was not a man to acquiesce in any one being a co-occupant of his editorial throne, and the consequence was, that the *Sun* found its way into Chancery. Eventually Mr. Jerdan parted with his one share for 300*l.*, and ceased all connexion with the paper. Mr. Taylor then became supreme in the *Sun* establishment; and on his installation into the editorial chair the “Peter Pindar” of the day, and the personal friend of Mr. Taylor, said, “Now, Taylor, the *Sun* has hitherto been without a ray of light while in the hands of George Rose, and I hope you will light it up.” It did very greatly improve under the editorship of the author of “Monsieur Tonson.” I may here mention, that “Peter Pindar” was a somewhat frequent contributor to the *Sun* at this period of its history, of those epigrammatic poetical pieces for which he had become so celebrated.

I have not learnt what the number of shares was at this time, into which the *Sun* was divided, but from



incidental statements I have met with, there must have been a good many. A favourite number of shares into which newspaper property was at this time divided, was twenty-four or sixteen. The former was the number of the *Courier*, and the latter that of the *Times*. Assuming that either of these numbers was that of the *Sun*, the circumstance of Mr. Jerdan receiving 300*l.* for his share, shows that in 1816 it must have been a good property. Slowly but surely, however, it began, a few years after that, to fall off in circulation, until it was sold in 1825 at a much lower price than its estimated value in 1816. The late Mr. Murdo Young became the purchaser.

The circulation was only at this time from 300 to 400 copies daily, and the price paid for copyright, type, presses, and indeed the whole "plant," was only 500*l.* It was believed at the time that Mr. Young had co-proprietors in the property thus purchased. But be that as it may, the sole control of the *Sun* was in Mr. Young's hands, and it is due to him to say that never were the destinies of a newspaper confided to a more intelligent or more spirited manager. The *Courier* and the *Globe* had before Mr. Young's advent to the management of the *Sun* published second editions of their papers, but soon after the *Sun* came into his hands, a new and most attractive feature was introduced into evening journalism. He caused *third* editions of his paper to be published *every* evening, bringing down to within as short a period of the post's departure for the provinces as the Post

Office regulations would admit, not only the ordinary news of interest of the day, but the proceedings during the Session in both Houses of Parliament. In order that this might be done with greater effect, Mr. Young, instead of retaining only one reporter on his establishment, as was the case with the other evening journals of the period, engaged five reporters regularly to report the proceedings in the Lords and Commons. In cases, indeed, of engrossing interest, Mr. Young called in two or three supernumeraries, making his Parliamentary staff of reporters nearly equal to that of the morning papers. This, I need not say, not only created a sort of sensation in the metropolis and provinces, but was, of course, attended with great expense. I am assured it was not less than 20,000*l.* in a few years, but it caused a rapid and extensive rise in the circulation of the paper.

Shortly after this, the question of Catholic Emancipation began to excite, in this country, something of the interest which it had done for several years previously in Ireland; and Mr. Young, in order to give the earliest possible reports of such important meetings as should be held on the subject, made arrangements for expressing such reports to the leading towns in the kingdom. To these expresses, first introduced by the *Sun*, and never indeed, by reason of the expenses they cost, adopted by any other London journal, I shall refer more fully hereafter. In the meantime, I may state, that an incident occurred in connexion with one of their number, which created

an interest, mingled with no small amusement at the time. A meeting of the freeholders of Surrey was called in 1828, under the auspices of the late Earl of Winchelsea, in order to express the feelings of the county against Catholic Emancipation. The meeting was appointed to take place on Penenden Heath, and as it was known that Mr. Richard Lalor Sheil, at the time the ablest and most eloquent advocate of Catholic Emancipation, except Mr. Daniel O'Connell, either in this country or in Ireland, was to come over from the latter country as the recognised representative of the Catholic Association, for the express purpose of attempting to defeat the object for which the meeting had been called, by carrying a resolution in *favour* of the removal of existing Roman Catholic disabilities,—the meeting was looked forward to both by the advocates and opponents of Catholic Emancipation with an intensity of interest to which there had rarely been a parallel. Tens of thousands proceeded to Penenden Heath from London, on the appointed day, and were met by many thousands more from various parts of the county. The aggregate number present was estimated at from 100,000 to 130,000. In the meantime, as Mr. Sheil attached the greatest conceivable importance to the speech which he meant to deliver on the occasion, he wrote it out in full,—as, indeed, he did all his speeches to which he attached importance. Mr. Young, desirous of possessing a full and accurate report of the speech, in time for that evening's mail, and thus to anticipate—what never

had been done, in similar circumstances — all the morning papers of the following day, applied to Mr. Sheil for the manuscript of his speech, and obtained it some hours before it was delivered. It was forthwith put into type, and never dreaming that any mishap whatever would occur to prevent its delivery “amidst the deafening plaudits of the assembled myriads,” the speech appeared in the four o’clock edition of the *Sun*—within an hour or so of the time it was understood it would be delivered. We have heard much of late of the marvels of the electric telegraph, but here was a wonder not less great, at a time when electric telegraphs had not only not been even heard of, but when even railways were equally unknown. The feat, in short, was regarded as belonging to the category of the miraculous, and all the more so, as the very passages of the speech which were deemed the most brilliant by the *Sun* were interlarded with such phrases as “vehement applause;” “loud and long continued cheering;” “deafening plaudits,” &c. In this way off went the *Sun* to all parts of the country, to the great gratification of the friends of Catholic Emancipation; while in Ireland the speech of Mr. Sheil was received with the wildest rapture. Imagine what must have been the amazement of the public when, next morning, the *Times* and all the other morning papers came out with their respective reports of the proceedings at Penenden Heath, without one word of a speech of Mr. Sheil’s. People could not for some time believe their eyes. It was only after

they had sufficiently collected their dispersed senses, that they could comprehend how the matter stood. The explanation was, that while the opponents of Catholic Emancipation, under the auspices of the Earl of Winchelsea, and well nigh all the leading Orangemen of the county,—and they were numerous then,—had mustered their forces, and the advocates of the repeal of “Roman Catholic disabilities” had mustered theirs,—William Cobbett, author of *Cobbett's Weekly Register*, and Henry Hunt, the notorious demagogue and leader of the Radicals of his day, had organized a mob of roughs within a convenient distance of the place, with the determination of upsetting the meeting, by getting up scenes of uproar which would render it impossible for it to proceed. The mover and seconder of a resolution in opposition to Catholic Emancipation were so far listened to, because the Emancipation party were in ecstasies at the prospect of hearing Mr. Sheil, who, they doubted not, would scatter their speeches to the winds. The turn for the latter to speak having come, and he having risen for the purpose, the cheers from the friends of Catholic Emancipation were absolutely deafening, although the colossal concourse from whose throats they issued were assembled in the open air instead of under a roof. With these plaudits were mingled groans, howlings, and hisses, such as are rarely heard, even at uproarious public meetings. At length when some measure of silence had been obtained Mr. Cobbett rose and protested against Mr. Sheil being allowed

to speak at all. He asserted that as the meeting had been called as a meeting of freeholders of the county, while Mr. Sheil was no freeholder, it would be at the peril of the High Sheriff, who presided as Chairman, if, after the protest which he (Mr. Cobbett) had entered against the Irish orator saying a word, Sheil were permitted to proceed. The High Sheriff was in favour of Catholic Emancipation, and betrayed a wish that Mr. Sheil might be allowed to address the meeting; but Cobbett persisted in his opposition, and told the chairman that if Mr. Sheil presumed to open his mouth, he would begin to speak at the same time, and, if necessary to accomplish his purpose, would speak till sunset. Cobbett's words were music to the ears of the Orange party, gathered in thousands, while amidst deafening clamours from the Emancipation party to hear Sheil, Mr. Hunt, with his Radical rabble, joined in the general uproar. The result was that such a scene of confusion took place, lasting a long time, as has rarely been witnessed in this country, though at that time, when the question of Catholic Emancipation was at the height of its agitation, and the excitement before the passing of the Reform Bill was no less so, scenes of wild confusion were the reverse of rare. The upshot was, that poor Mr. Sheil returned, first to London, and afterwards to Ireland, quite crest-fallen; and all the more so that he was made the subject of the jeers of the journals of the day,—a favourite phrase being applied to him of "Speechless Shiel." It is a fact which consists with my own personal know-



ledge, that Mr. Sheil, who, as I have before stated, always wrote his principal speeches beforehand, could never afterwards be prevailed on to give his manuscript to any reporter before he had spoken his speech.

Of course, no one blamed Mr. Young for the part he acted in relation to the publication in the *Sun* of the non-delivered speech of Mr. Sheil at Penenden Heath. Mr. Young's enterprise in sending the speech by express to all the leading towns in the country, elicited universal admiration.

But still greater enterprise on the part of Mr. Young, in sending expresses of important intelligence, yet remained to be shown. In the country and in Parliament the Reform question began soon after this to engross the attention of all classes of his Majesty's subjects. And as soon as the question of Catholic Emancipation was carried—which it was in 1829—the subject of Parliamentary Reform literally convulsed the whole country. Mr. Young, seeing this, organized what might be called a *system* of expresses—not merely *occasional*—to every part of the kingdom, alike to the wonder and admiration of all classes of the community. And in his consuming zeal that no failure should take place in his plans, hitherto unprecedented, he actually undertook the superintendence of them personally, whenever the intelligence possessed unusual importance. He had relays of horses ready in all the more convenient places on the roads leading to the largest towns; and

himself sitting in a light vehicle, which, if my memory be not at fault, was constructed for the purpose, he distributed a few copies to the newspapers and chief public men in the towns he visited. Again and again did he start from London for Edinburgh and Glasgow, driving often at a rate which repeatedly placed his life in jeopardy, and remaining on the road sometimes night and day for thirty hours in succession; for it then required that length of time to reach Glasgow from London. This constituted a new era in the daily journalism of the metropolis. The whole of the provincial press exhausted language in their praise of the extraordinary and successful enterprise displayed by the *Sun* newspaper; and, as could hardly have been otherwise, the circulation of the paper rose with so great a rapidity, that but for a misunderstanding which took place between Mr. Young and Mr. Patrick Grant, who had become the principal monetary proprietor, though I cannot specify the exact time at which he did so, Mr. Young might soon have acquired an independency for life, if not a handsome fortune. Mr. Patrick Grant, who was the brother-in-law—not the brother, as has sometimes been stated—of the late Lord Glenelg, then a member of Lord Grey's Cabinet, started an opposition evening paper to the *Sun*, under the name of the *True Sun*, and as he lavished large sums of money in the attempt to establish it, this necessitated his selling his estate of Redcastle, in Ross-shire, for 40,000*l.*, to raise the

requisite funds. While he greatly injured the *Sun*, he ruined himself. In his fruitless efforts to make his rival paper, the *True Sun*, a success, Mr. Patrick Grant soon found himself in the Bankruptcy Court.

It was in 1832 that the *True Sun* was started by Mr. Patrick Grant in opposition to the *Sun*, by which time nearly 20,000*l.* had been expended on the latter. In the first year Mr. Grant had no fewer than four editors, and the offices were fitted up in a style of splendour which little accorded with the ultra Democratic principles which the paper advocated. Before his bankruptcy, Mr. Grant had lost 12,000*l.* or 15,000*l.* by the *True Sun*, and finding his resources exhausted, he announced in the paper itself that it was in difficulties, and appealed to its readers for contributions to enable him to carry it on. No response was made to the appeal, or none but a few pounds, if I remember rightly. But before this, Mr. Grant's interest in the *Sun* had been seized and sold for the creditors. Mr. Young, who had held a fourth share before, became the purchaser of the other three shares at the price of 6000*l.* This was in 1833, and the first thing he did on the *Sun* coming entirely into his own hands, was to order a new fount of type, and to enlarge the paper to the same size as the morning papers,—a thing never done before in the history of the metropolitan evening press.

With regard to the *True Sun*, it passed, after the bankruptcy of Mr. Patrick Grant, into the hands of new proprietors, none of whom, however, remained

long in that capacity. Several of them were ruined by the paper. Among those who were temporarily proprietors were some Roman Catholics, whose names were mentioned to me at the time; but they were mostly unknown to the public, and therefore their names have escaped my memory. The only incident worth recording in connexion with the *True Sun*, while it was in the hands of the Roman Catholics, was, according to a statement made to me at the time, that Mr. Daniel O'Connell had contributed 1000*l.* towards carrying it on.

After this, Mr. Daniel Whittle Harvey, who was at the time Member for Southwark, bought the *True Sun*; but the attempt to raise it from its low estate was seen by every one but Mr. Harvey himself to be hopeless, and before many months were over he saw and felt it too. Though it had successively Laman Blanchard, Leigh Hunt, and J. W. Fox, afterwards M.P. for Oldham, as editors, the *True Sun* sank one evening below the newspaper horizon never to rise again. Mr. Young continued to struggle on for many years with the *Sun* under great difficulties. Ultimately the paper got into Chancery, and some time after that occurrence Mr. Young ceased to be the proprietor and conductor. Mr. Young at one time—about, if I remember rightly, twenty years ago—hoped to improve the fortunes of the *Sun* by having also a morning edition; but this experiment did not succeed. It only made matters worse. Mr. Young told me himself what his losses were during

the second year the experiment lasted. If my memory be not at fault, it was 1500*l.* he named as his annual loss. A second effort was made a few years ago to make the *Sun* a morning as well as evening paper; but it equally failed with the first. Afterwards the experiment was tried of reducing the price from three pence to a penny, and somewhat diminishing the size of the paper; but that only increased the circulation by a few quires. The ultimate result is now recorded in the great fact that the *Sun* evening newspaper having, as Addison says of another and greater sun, "grown dim with age," has been extinguished among the luminaries of the journalistic firmament.

It is right to state that the feature now so common in our daily papers, of noticing all the periodical literature of the day, on the beginning of the month, was first introduced in the *Sun* under Mr. Young's management. So was that, which is now universal among the evening journals, of giving extracts from the leading articles of the morning papers. The reviews of new books, too, constituted a prominent feature in the *Sun* while under the control of Mr. Young, especially because, though often necessarily written in haste, they displayed in many instances as intimate an acquaintance with the contents of the book reviewed, as if the writer had intended his review to appear in one of the quarterlies, instead of a daily journal. At the time of which I am chiefly speaking Mr. Deacon was the editor and principal

writer in the *Sun*, and from his pen the majority of these able and analytical reviews of new books came. Mr. Deacon was a man of cultivated intellect. While acting as editor of the *Sun*, he was a frequent contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine*, and others of the leading periodicals of the day. He was the author, too, of several three volume novels, one at least of which, "The Bashful Irishman," was not only clever, but very successful. Curiously enough, what he said of the hero of his novel was true of himself. He was an exceedingly modest, indeed "bashful" man. He was so constitutionally, but the great infirmity of deafness under which he laboured, contributed much to making him more retired in society. When I met with him he was, in addition to his deafness, in ill health, and soon after—I think it must be a quarter of a century ago—Mr. Deacon died, a comparatively young man.

I cannot close my notice of Mr. Young, in connexion with the *Sun* newspaper, without expressing my sense of the great injustice of successive Liberal Governments in not, in his later days, making some provision for him in the shape of one of those many offices which Governments always have at their disposal, whereby he might have had at least a competency secured to him for life. Their neglect of him was as ungrateful as it was ungracious, for he had been a most zealous supporter of the Russell, the Palmerston, and the Gladstone Administrations in succession. Even if nothing better had been done



for Mr. Young, they might surely, at least, have given him one of the 150*l.*, or even 100*l.*, literary civil pensions for life, which are in many cases granted to persons who have not a tithe of the claims which he had. Apart from Mr. Young's journalistic claims on every Liberal Government, he had literary claims of a high order. His "Wallace," a drama in five acts, was a work of great merit. I well remember the admiration with which I read it at the time of its publication. Yet so far as each of these Liberal Ministries were concerned, Mr. Young would have had no provision whatever made for his old age, for he lived till his eighty-fourth year. But what they did not do, his devoted daughters did for him by the constant employment of those eminent literary talents with which Providence has endowed them.

The *Sun* was sold in the year 1850 by order of the Court of Chancery, in which it had been for some time, for 2024*l.* The purchaser was Mr. Charles Kent, under whose editorship it remained until it ceased to exist. Mr. Charles Kent is a gentleman who has won for himself a high position, both as a journalist and as an author, and equally in the realms of poetry and general literature. Mr. Kent was one of the most intimate and esteemed friends of Mr. Charles Dickens, and I believe that one of the last letters, if not *the* last letter, which Mr. Dickens ever wrote, was to Mr. Kent.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### PAST METROPOLITAN DAILY PAPERS.

THE COURIER—THE REPRESENTATIVE—THE CONSTITUTIONAL—THE MORNING STAR.

I NOW come to the COURIER. The history of this journal is remarkable. It was established in 1792, in the midst of the French Revolution; and having an influential as well as a numerous proprietary—the shares being divided into twenty-four—with access to exclusive sources of information, together with able editors and contributors—it almost immediately surpassed in circulation all its morning and evening contemporaries. Even the *Times* itself was for several years below the *Courier* in circulation. At first, and for several years, it identified itself with Liberal principles, and was believed to have decided sympathies with the revolutionary party in France. Among a large portion of the population this would have, in the state of British public feeling at the time, contributed in no small measure to extend its circulation. But though the *Courier* had a large circulation from its commencement, two circumstances occurred—one in 1798, and the other a trial for libel in the following

year—which contributed much to bring it still more extensively before the public. The *Courier* having stated, in 1798, that the French prisoners at Liverpool had been cruelly treated by the British Government, the Attorney-General was instructed to bring an action against the paper for a libel on the Government. This, he afterwards stated in the House of Commons, he was not only prepared to do, but had adopted every means in his power to ascertain who was the actual writer of the paragraph. But the registered proprietor having twelve months before sold his property in the *Courier*, his efforts, he added, were unsuccessful; and not wishing to punish the printer, who was but a nonentity, and therefore not morally responsible, he had felt it his duty to abandon the prosecution. But in order, he said, to secure efficient action in similar cases, and in all cases of libel, he would ask extended power from the House to enable prosecutors in actions for libel against newspapers to fix more completely the responsibility on the proprietors and writers of those journals. Soon after, to accomplish these objects, he brought in a measure entitled “A Bill for preventing the Mischief arising from Newspapers being printed and published by persons unknown, and for regulating them in these respects.” The bill was strenuously opposed by Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Tierney, Mr. John Cam Hobhouse (afterwards Sir John Hobhouse and Lord Broughton), Lord William Russell, Sir William Pulteney, Sir Francis Burdett, and all the other members of mark

identifying themselves at the time with an advanced Liberalism. The bill was, of course, supported by all the friends of the Government; but the chief ministerial supporter of the measure was Lord Temple, who, in the vehemence of his advocacy, worked himself into one of the most violent passions ever witnessed on the floor of the House of Commons. Indeed, he lost all self-control, both in his language and his manner. Mr. Tierney having stated that the editor of the *Courier* had commissioned him to assure the House that, at the time the incriminated paragraph had appeared, he believed it to be true, otherwise it would not have been inserted, Lord Temple, in a state of frenzied excitement, called on Mr. Tierney to give up the name of the editor of the *Courier* to the House, as it was evident he was personally acquainted with him. He added, by way of describing and denouncing the *Courier*, that it was a paper which was "a scandalous outrage on law, on morality, religion, and justice," and was the echo of France, and the organ of the French Directory. He therefore called on Mr. Tierney to furnish such information respecting the editor of the *Courier* as would "bring such a scoundrel to justice." In answer to the demand thus made by Lord Temple, Mr. Tierney, calmly but resolutely, said that he questioned Lord Temple's right to make it; but, be that as it might, he would not turn common informer by divulging the name of the editor, who was a man of respectability. Mr. Tierney added, with great emphasis, that though Lord Temple had

gone so far in availing himself of the privileges of the House as to call a man a scoundrel who had not the means of answering him, he would not, perhaps, have ventured to do so in his presence.

The bill, however, of the Attorney-General was, after an adjourned debate, carried by a large majority; and, as will be seen hereafter, soon produced a harvest of newspaper press prosecutions.

The other circumstance to which I have alluded as contributing, soon after the *Courier's* commencement, to the extension of its knowledge by the general public, was an action for libel which was brought against it early in 1799. On this occasion, the printer, publisher, and proprietor—at the time, Mr. John Parry—were severally indicted at the Guildhall, on an *ex-officio* information by the Attorney-General, for a libel on Paul, the then Emperor of Russia. The paragraph on which the prosecution was founded was a brief one. It was this:—"The Emperor of Russia is rendering himself obnoxious to his subjects by various acts of tyranny, and ridiculous in the eyes of Europe by his inconsistency. He has now published an edict prohibiting the exportation of timber, deal, &c. In consequence of this ill-timed law, upwards of one hundred sail of vessels are likely to return to this kingdom without freights." The paragraph turned out to be entirely unfounded, which of course rendered a verdict against the defendants certain, although they were defended by all the ability and all the eloquence of Mr. Erskine, afterwards Lord Erskine. The sen-

tence on Mr. Parry, the proprietor, was six months' imprisonment in the King's Bench Prison, and a fine of 100*l.*, with his own security for five years in 500*l.*, and two sureties in 250*l.* each. The other two defendants were severally sentenced to one month's imprisonment in the same prison. Considering that Lord Kenyon was the judge, and that the Attorney-General—Sir John Scott, afterwards Lord Eldon—was the prosecutor, the wonder is that they were let off so easily. The case created great and general interest; and as the *Courier* was only in the seventh year of its existence, it derived material benefit from it.

In the same year, 1799, the *Courier* came into the possession of Mr. Daniel Stuart. He was a man of great enterprise and administrative capacity; and believing that Toryism would turn out to be a much more profitable concern than the Liberalism with which the paper had hitherto identified itself, he resolved on giving it that complexion in a much more marked manner than had been imparted to it some brief period before the property came into his hands. He at once applied himself to the task of finding out gifted writers who would work for him at the smallest possible pay compatible with actual subsistence. Mr. Stuart was proprietor, at the same period, of the *Morning Post*. In the meantime, it is right to remark that the contributors—or “apprentices,” as he called them—who were nominally engaged for the *Morning Post*, had occasionally to render their services as well



to the *Courier*. This has often led to confusion. Amongst those contributors—three of them being at that time very little known in the world of literature, but who afterwards rose to great eminence, and whose reputations will be perpetuated for generations to come, who, at the commencement of the century, were journalistically connected with Mr. Stuart,—were Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Charles Lamb. It was the general belief at the time, and it continued so for nearly forty years afterwards, that Southey was a stated and paid contributor to the *Courier*; but that was a mistake. In the year 1838, Mr. Daniel Stuart—whose mind was still as clear as ever, though approaching the advanced age of fourscore—wrote a long letter to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, contradicting certain statements made by Mr. Gillman in his "Life of Coleridge," and also by Mr. Henry Coleridge, the nephew of Coleridge, in his "Remains" of his uncle, in relation to his—Mr. Stuart's—journalistic connexion with the latter. In this letter, Mr. Stuart emphatically asserts that Southey never wrote a line, either in prose or verse, for the *Courier*. But Southey was—as will be shown hereafter—a regular and paid contributor to Mr. Stuart's twin paper, the *Morning Post*. With regard to Wordsworth's alleged connexion with the *Courier*, Mr. Stuart, in the letter in the *Gentleman's Magazine* to which I have just referred, states distinctly that it only extended to his sending to the *Courier* some extracts from his then unpublished pamphlet on the "Cintra Convention"—

that convention exciting general attention at the time. In relation to the connexion of Charles Lamb with the *Courier*, Mr. Stuart says nothing definite, though it was the general belief at the time that he was connected with it. And that belief was of service to the paper; because he, of the four afterwards distinguished men I have mentioned, was the best known. Indeed, he possessed considerable reputation at the time. As respects Coleridge, he became the chief writer of leading articles—if not, indeed, the editor—until the year 1804, when Mr. Stuart sold the *Morning Post*. Coleridge claims, in his “Literary Biography,” to have made the fortune of the *Courier*, as well as of the *Morning Post*. Mr. Stuart virtually makes the admission that Coleridge was the principal cause of the prosperity of both papers; and yet, by a strange inconsistency, charges him with idleness in his journalistic capacity. The two things—prosperity and idleness—have hitherto been considered incompatible. As Coleridge was dead before this imputation of idleness was cast upon him by Mr. Stuart, it was at least ungenerous, even had it been just, to make it at all. But the justice of the imputation was virtually disposed of by the fact, that Coleridge had, during the several intervening years from the time Mr. Stuart bought the *Morning Post*, in 1795, until within two years of the time he sold it, in 1804, retained the position of having the sole charge, according to his own words, “of the literary and political departments” of that journal; and he was continued

for several years more in the same position in the *Courier*.

But unjust and ungenerous as this imputation was, Mr. Stuart brought another still more so against the poet. The latter had written, in his "Literary Biography," the following paragraph, in relation to his journalistic labours:—"Yet in these labours I employed—and, in the belief of partial friends, wasted—the prime and manhood of my intellect. Most assuredly, they added nothing to my fortune or reputation. The industry of the week supplied the necessities of the week. From Government, or the friends of Government, I not only never received remuneration, or even expected it, but I was never honoured with a single acknowledgment or expression of satisfaction." On this paragraph Mr. Stuart founded, by implication, the charge of having prostituted his talents, and the journals he conducted, to the advocacy of the Government of the day, with a view to obtaining the reward of a Government appointment. Never was an imputation made on any man with less of even seeming ground to support it. Why, the very paragraph on which it was grounded furnishes conclusive proof of its utterly unfounded character. Coleridge distinctly says that he not only never received, but "never expected," any favour from Government.

Mr. Coleridge and Sir James Mackintosh worked together for some time on the *Courier*; but they quarrelled, and lived in a state of estrangement

from each other. Mackintosh, who married Stuart's sister, continued to write articles for the *Courier*. According to the "New Biographical Dictionary," edited by the late Rev. James Rose, Principal of King's College, he was a leading writer for it from 1808 to 1814. In the former year Wordsworth was a stated contributor to the *Courier*; and, according to Stuart, wrote some powerful articles on the Spanish and Portuguese navies of that time.

In 1811, Mr. Stuart delegated the management of the *Courier* to his partner, Mr. Street. Several of the more prominent contributors to the paper began from this time to withdraw their allegiance from it. Mr. Stuart himself, from the year 1816, resolved, he tells us, gradually to withdraw from the *Courier* altogether; and, at the end of that year, he took steps accordingly.

But I am anticipating my narrative. I must return in order to make it consecutive, to the time, at the close of the last century, when the *Courier* fell into other hands. In the course of a few years after this, the French Revolution lost, in a great measure, the popularity which it had acquired among the masses in populous towns and in the country; and whether for that reason or for some other reason it is difficult to decide, but the *Courier* abjured the Liberal principles, with which it had identified itself in the earlier years of its existence. It became, as I said before, what would now be called a Conservative journal.

As the French army, under Napoleon I., was making extraordinary progress in its aggressions on the dominions of Continental sovereigns, and the alarm had become general of an invasion, by Bonaparte, of this country, all who felt for the safety of the land and the preservation of social order speedily rallied around the new standard erected by the *Courier*. It devoted itself to the special support of Church and State. That, indeed, became its motto. The clergy everywhere not only became its patrons by "taking it in," as the phrase is, but sounded its praise from the pulpit as well as in private. It has been stated—and I have no reason to doubt the accuracy of the statement—that at one time no fewer than five thousand clergymen were subscribers to it. Indeed, Toryism generally, I ought to mention, was at this time in all its glory; and it was then quite a rare thing to meet with a man, with a decent suit of clothes on his back, who would have had the moral courage to avow himself a Liberal. Under these circumstances, it will surprise no one to be told that the *Courier* became a source of much greater profit to its proprietors than it had been in the most prosperous period of its Liberalism. Its circulation every evening is represented as having been, in these the palmiest days of its history, about 12,000 copies. This was at that time deemed an immense circulation for any paper,—one, indeed, which had never been reached by any daily, not even by any of the morning journals. My belief, indeed, is that no other daily paper, morning or even-

ing, could before this boast of a circulation amounting to even the half of 12,000 copies.

But while this was the stated circulation of the *Courier*, its sale on special occasions, when it contained exclusive intelligence respecting some important events in connexion with the progress of the French war—which being now a recognised organ of the Government, the information which the Foreign Office habitually furnished to it was exclusive—was often much greater than it had ever experienced before. On one occasion, when it published exclusively some war intelligence of the greatest importance, and of a very exciting kind, the sale of the *Courier* was 16,500 copies; and would have reached from 30,000 to 40,000, had the necessary mechanical power existed for the printing of that number of copies. It was indeed a frequent occurrence to lose the sale of thousands of copies for want of the necessary mechanical power to produce them. It will be remembered that the process of printing by steam was then unknown; and no printing by hand, even the most improved mode, could throw off more than 750 copies per hour. With the view, however, of supplying the demand for the *Courier* to as great an extent as possible, four duplicates of each impression were set up, or “composed,” as the printers say, and four presses were kept constantly at work.

The *Courier*, as will be inferred from the statements I have already made, displayed, as a rule, an amount of tact and energy, in conjunction with a liberal, I



might almost say, a lavish, expenditure where an object was to be gained, which had no parallel in the previous history of the newspaper press of the metropolis. It was the first evening journal to publish second and third editions; and the sale of these editions was sometimes incredibly great, even when there was really no additional information of the slightest importance in them,—sometimes, indeed, when there was literally not a single word of additional information at all. It was no uncommon thing to publish a third edition, simply to announce that no additional intelligence had been received in relation to whatever may have chanced to be the most exciting news contained in the second edition. But the public, not knowing beforehand that this was to be the sole purport of the third edition; and the heading of the subject attracting most attention in the first or second editions, announcing in flaming letters the words, “Third Edition,” being repeated, and hundreds of boys blowing horns and bawling out in all parts of the town, “Third Edition of the *Courier!*” — “Important Intelligence!” — the sale of these third editions, with literally nothing in them, was often so great as only to be limited by the productive capacity of the printing machinery to throw the papers off. Then, again, to minister to the intense desire of the public to obtain the latest information which could be procured in relation to some event which had occurred, and had absorbed public interest, second and third

editions of the *Courier* were published, containing some additional intelligence, but often of ludicrously little interest. Probably nothing of this kind ever occurred equal to an incident in connexion with the murder, in 1812, of Mr. Perceval, in the lobby of the House of Commons, by Bellingham, who was insane. That tragedy is known to every one. When shot, he fell into the arms of Mr. Vincent Dowling, afterwards editor of *Bell's Life in London*, who repeatedly related the occurrence to me. Of course, so terrible a tragedy created a great sensation in London,—so great, indeed, as to exceed almost anything ever before known. The *Courier* of that evening published a second edition, the occurrence not having taken place in time for the first. As the dreadful deed was but the matter of a moment—Mr. Perceval's death being instantaneous—there was, of necessity, but little to be said on the subject. All that could be said was so in the second edition. But the public longing for more particulars was insatiable; and in order to gratify it—so far, at least, as the publication of a third edition could do it—the people of the *Courier* felt that a third edition must be published. Accordingly, a third edition was placarded in the windows of the office, in letters sufficiently large to be read across the street—"Third Edition! The Dreadful Assassination of Mr. Perceval! Further and Exclusive Particulars!" The third edition might have been bought in myriads, if there had existed the requisite machinery to print them. And what does the reader suppose the pur-

chasers found in their third edition? Simply this:—  
“ We stop the press to announce that the sanguinary villain, Bellingham, refuses to be shaved !”

The *Courier* was—as I have already mentioned—at this time a most successful commercial enterprise. I speak from what I regard as good authority when I say that its annual profits ranged from 12,000*l.* to 15,000*l.* As circumstances have given me a specially intimate knowledge of newspapers, I can easily believe this. First of all, the paper consisted of only four pages, of four small columns each page, only a little larger than each of the eight pages of the *Globe* in its present form. Then there was the unusual largeness of the size of the greater part of the type used, and the number of the advertisements, while there was hardly anything to pay for contributors, correspondents, or reporters. The price, too, I ought to add—though fourpence nominally, but in reality threepence three-farthings only—a discount of twenty per cent. being allowed by Government—had to be paid for the stamp,—was sevenpence. With, therefore, the amazingly cheap manner in which the paper was got up, its large circulation, and the number and price of the advertisements, I can easily believe that the yearly profits of the *Courier*, before the conclusion of the peace of 1815, must have been nearer 15,000*l.* than 12,000*l.*

But on the conclusion of the war with the great Napoleon, after the battle of Waterloo, the circulation, and consequently the profits, of the *Courier* began

to decline. Still, the circulation continued to be relatively great; so great that, finding it impossible to meet the demand in time for the post, the proprietors were obliged to resort, at great expense, to the purchase of greatly improved machinery, in order to insure a more rapid printing of the paper. This was accomplished in the year 1823; and after the increased power had been tried and found successful, an intimation was made, on the 14th of November of that year, that the proprietors had procured machinery of such extraordinary power that they could now throw off 2000 copies an hour; and that they had, on emergencies, succeeded in throwing off 2800 impressions of their paper in an hour.

In four years after this, on the advent—1827—of Mr. Canning to the office of Prime Minister, the *Courier*, which had up to this time, ever since the abjuration of the Liberalism of its earlier years, been an uncompromising supporter of Toryism, identified itself with the principles of his Administration. These were what might be called a Liberal-Toryism, or a Tory-Liberalism, just as we have now Conservative-Liberalism, or Liberal-Conservatism; but that would not suit the thorough-going Tories of the time. Mr. William Mudford, author of "First and Last," a series of powerful tales which had appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*, and were exceedingly popular, was at this time editor of the *Courier*, at a salary of 1000*l.* a year, the highest salary perhaps ever given to the editor of an evening paper. He supported the

Administration of Canning—with whom he was on terms of personal friendship—with much more zeal than discretion; and the consequence was that he placed his editorial position in peril. On Mr. Canning's interposition, however, according to information which I received soon after that time, he was allowed to remain at the editorial helm. Meanwhile, headed by the Duke of Wellington in the Lords and Sir Robert Peel in the Commons, the Opposition to Mr. Canning, and the semi-Liberal principles on which his Government was based and conducted, hastened his own death, as well as the death of his Administration. Speaking commercially, the change of policy was one of the most unfortunate steps which the *Courier* could have taken. The whole of the ultra-Tory party denounced and deserted it. Soon after this, on finding the circulation falling off rapidly, it returned to the advocacy of Toryism, the more especially because as, on the death of Mr. Canning, the Duke of Wellington, after the interregnum Ministry of Lord Goderich, acceded to the Premiership, and formed a thorough Tory administration.

With these changes of policy on the part of the *Courier*, there was, as might be supposed, a change of editorship. Mr. Eugenius Roche succeeded Mr. Mudford. Mr. Roche was appointed with a salary of 1000*l.* a year,—a large salary to receive as editor of an evening paper. Mr. Roche, one of the most amiable and respected gentlemen that ever filled an

editorial chair, was father of Mr. Roche, one of the present registrars in the Court of Bankruptcy, and the first gentleman with whom, on coming to London thirty-six years ago, I formed an intimate friendship. Mr. Roche was editor of the *New Times* when he was appointed to the editorship of the *Courier*; but, unfortunately, he had been part proprietor as well as editor of the former journal, by which partnership he lost a large amount of money,—large, at least, for him, who, like the generality of editors, was the reverse of rich. It was, too, a condition of his purchasing one out of the twenty-four shares into which the proprietorship of the *Courier* was divided, that he should receive the appointment of editor. The price of the one twenty-fourth share of the *Courier*, which was 5000 guineas, was provided and paid through friends, and Mr. Roche was installed in the editorial chair at, as I have said, a salary of 1000*l.* a year. This was in 1827; but Mr. Roche only survived a few months to discharge the duties which devolved upon him as editor of the *Courier*. I pause here for a single moment to call attention to the valuable property which the *Courier*, up to this year—1827,—still was, though greatly diminished from what it was twenty years before that time. If one of the twenty-four shares into which the property was divided brought, when sold to Mr. Roche, 5000 guineas, the entire property must have been worth nearly 120,000*l.* Yet, in little more than twelve years, the *Courier*, hitherto so valuable commercially, became ruinous in that sense.



After carrying it on for some years at a great loss, it was discontinued.

I cannot speak positively to the fact that Mr. Roche was succeeded by Mr. John Galt—who, as the author of “Laurie Tod” and various other works of fiction, was second only at this time in reputation as a novelist to Sir Walter Scott; but it was somewhere about this time that he accepted the position of editor of the *Courier*, at a salary of 800*l.* a year. Mr. Galt only remained in the editorial chair for the brief period of four months. It was my good fortune to meet with him in the year 1833, at his house at Brompton, although he had had no fewer than fifteen successive attacks of paralysis, at intervals sometimes of a week, or month or two, which had unfitted him for seeing friends; and on these occasions he used to discourse freely with me in relation to his four months’ editorship of the *Courier*. He told me that the sole reason why he quitted his editorial connexion with that journal was that he persisted in the advocacy of a policy much too Liberal for the then proprietors; and, having quarrelled with them on this account, he severed his connexion with the paper. Several other editorial changes took place after this, which was about the year 1830. Soon after that year, Mr. James Stuart became manager of the paper. This, curiously enough, was the third manager of the *Courier* of the same name, yet neither having the slightest relationship to each other. The last Mr James Stuart, with whom I was on terms of personal intimacy, was

a gentleman well known and much respected in Scotland, and a near relation of the Earl of Moray, a Scottish nobleman. He was a Whig of the kind of which Brougham, Jeffrey, and Sydney Smith were types, sixty years ago, and of which the *Edinburgh Review* was the quarterly organ, and the *Scotsman*, then a twice-a-week newspaper. Sir Alexander Boswell, son of Mr. James Boswell, the friend and biographer of Dr. Johnson, assailed Mr. Stuart in the coarsest and most personally offensive manner, in a scurrilous Tory Scotch publication called the *Beacon*, conducted in the same manner as, in London, the *Age* and the *Satirist* were forty years ago. Mr. Stuart challenged him to a duel. It was fought, and Sir Alexander Boswell was killed. This was in the year 1822. The event created a great sensation in Scotland at the time; but the sympathy for Mr. Stuart was all but universal, because the provocation which he received was so great. Never before was such deep and universal execration felt among the better classes of society in Scotland as burned in their bosoms at the course which this journal pursued. It was only able to survive for four months the intense indignation everywhere shown in that country at its publication. What made the feeling all the stronger was the fact—which, though it was sought to be concealed, was soon discovered—that Sir Walter Scott was the principal proprietor. Many, indeed, believed—and believe to this day—that Sir Walter provided for it the necessary funds. He was an ultra-Tory, and

might have taken pleasure in seeing the leading men of the opposite party unsparingly attacked. But it is due to the memory of Sir Walter to say that no one—not even his bitterest political opponents—would ever have imputed to him a deliberate intention to start a journal for the purpose of assassinating the private characters of those who were opposed to him in politics. In the exercise of charity, we are bound to believe what was said by Sir Walter's friends in relation to this unfortunate affair,—that he had been led into it by very different representations as to what the character of the *Beacon* would be, from what it actually was. Mr. Stuart soon afterwards went to America, and remained there for several years. On his return, he wrote a very interesting work, in two volumes, on the United States. On becoming manager, about the time I have mentioned, of the *Courier*, he made great exertions to recover, were it only partially, the ground it had lost; but without effect. In 1833, he mentioned to me that he had made up his mind to try an experiment which had never been tried in the history of the evening press. That was, to publish on a particular day a double sheet,—a sheet of eight pages, instead of the usual four pages. He added, that he intended to make it a feature of that particular number to devote one entire page of the eight pages to reviews of books; and asked me if I would undertake the duty. I agreed, and received handsome remuneration for my labour; but the result of

the novel experiment did not realize Mr. Stuart's hopes.

The truth was, that the frequent changes in the politics of the paper and its editors—of the latter, there were four in little more than two years—had inflicted upon it a blow from the effects of which it could not be recovered by any amount of ability, or any number of expedients, however ingenious. Mr. Stuart continued to conduct the *Courier* till the year 1836, when he received from Lord Melbourne the appointment of Inspector of Factories, in which office he continued till his death. I cannot permit this brief statement respecting Mr. James Stuart to pass without adding that he was eminently a gentleman, both by birth and by the constitution of his mind. And he was as kind as he was courteous. He was a man of warm and open heart, which was manifested to all persons and at all times, notwithstanding the many vicissitudes—some of them of a nature calculated to restrain displays of kindness—through which he was called to pass. His nature, indeed, often showed itself to be too generous to be compatible with prudence. Mr. Stuart died in 1849, in the seventy-fourth year of his age; and no one who was numbered among his acquaintances, as I was, could fail to regard his memory with other than feelings of the warmest affection.

On Mr. Stuart's retirement from the editorship of the *Courier*, in 1836, Mr. Laman Blanchard was appointed to that office. Like Mr. Stuart, Mr. Blan-

chard belonged to the Liberal party, and during his *régime* conducted the journal on Liberal principles; but his reign was very brief. The paper was again sold to the Tory party; and, as a matter of course, Mr. Blanchard was at once released from the editorship. The paper staggered on for a year or two longer, under a new editor, whose name no one ever knew—at least, it was not known to the public; and then, after a very eventful and chequered life, it passed away for ever. It expired after an existence of close upon half a century.

In the list of morning papers which belong to the past, there is one which, though its existence was but brief, is entitled to a few words of notice, were it only because its first and last editor was the present Mr. Disraeli. Its name was the REPRESENTATIVE. It was started in the year 1825, by Mr. Murray, the then eminent publisher, of Albemarle Street, and father of the present perhaps still more eminent publisher of the same name, in the same street. The late Mr. Murray had not only been a signally successful publisher of important books, but he was the personal friend of a great number of the leading Tory noblemen and members of the House of Commons. He was also proprietor of the *Quarterly Review*, which, at that time, was at the height both of its reputation and its commercial success. He did not, therefore, see why a morning paper, conducted on what he called “sound Constitutional principles,” and earnestly and ably advocating those principles as embodied in Church and

State,—should not succeed. With these views, and under these auspices, the *Representative* was brought out, under the editorial auspices of Mr. Disraeli, then, though not much more than twenty years of age, one of the most popular novelists of the day.

I am aware that it has been stated, as with an air of authority, and so recently as within the last two years, that Mr. Disraeli, though connected with the *Representative*, was not the editor. Some, indeed, confidently affirm that Mr. Justice Coleridge, who, though retired for some years from the judicial bench, still lives, was the actual editor of the *Representative*. All my general information would have conducted to a contrary conclusion. Mr. Justice Coleridge was at that time simply a rising barrister. He was nothing more. His name was unknown in literature; and therefore it was not in the nature of things that Mr. Disraeli, who, young as he was, had, as I have just stated, attained to great literary eminence, would have submitted to act under Mr. Coleridge. It might have been true that Mr. Coleridge contributed to the *Representative*; but he never was, strictly speaking, the editor. Indeed I have met with a gentleman who has, within the last few months, seen a letter received from Mr. Justice Coleridge, now in his ninetyeth year, who states distinctly that he never wrote a single line for the *Representative*. Mr. Disraeli was editorially supreme at the *Representative* office so long as that journal lived. If any one should still have a doubt on the subject, I would refer him to



Chambers's "Book of Days," where the fact is asserted as one beyond all question. Three years ago the *Pall Mall Gazette* repeated the assertion that Mr. Disraeli was the sole editor of the *Representative*, and Mr. Disraeli has never *himself* publicly denied the fact, though some of his friends have.

The amount of salary which Mr. Disraeli received has not transpired; at least, it has never been mentioned in my hearing from a source on which I could rely. But this was well known at the time,—that the offices were fitted up in a style of splendour which has had no parallel before or since in the annals of the Newspaper Press. The reception room especially—the visitors to which were expected to be mostly of the aristocracy—was furnished in gorgeous style. It might have been, had any one been brought into it blindfolded, mistaken for the drawing-room of a Duchess residing in Berkeley Square. It was expected that Mr. Disraeli would encourage Mr. Murray's aristocratic friends to make frequent calls, by according to them a courteous reception; but Mr. Disraeli did not then—any more than he does now, or did at any intervening period of his history—enjoy any remarkable reputation for affability of manners. But whether that was the cause, or whatever the cause may have been, the reception-room of the *Representative* was but little visited; and Mr. Murray's anticipations of the benefit which his new morning paper would derive from being talked about in the clubs and West-end circles, in connexion with its magnificent apartments,—were con-

sequently disappointed. This led—it is confidently stated by those who ought to possess correct information on the subject—to a coolness, after a few weeks had elapsed, between the proprietor and the editor. Of course, the signal failure from the first of the *Representative*, both as a political organ and a commercial enterprise, was not calculated to bring about a better feeling. The paper never had a circulation worthy the name; while its advertisements were few in number, and of an unprofitable class. Even Mr. Murray's brethren of the bibliopolie business—on whom he relied for a number of advertisements of new books—even they grievously disappointed him. The reader will be prepared for the result. The *Representative* expired after a feeble and unhappy existence of six months.

Various statements have been made as to the extent of the loss which Mr. Murray sustained by this venture. Some have gone so far as to say that, in round numbers, it was not less than 20,000*l.*; others have affirmed that it did not exceed 10,000*l.* My own opinion, after hearing the various statements made on the subject, is, that the actual loss on the *Representative* was the medium sum between these maximum and minimum ones,—that is, that the extent of Mr. Murray's loss on his paper was 15,000*l.*

I know that many who are not acquainted with the expenses incident to the publication of a morning paper will feel it difficult to believe that so large an amount as 15,000*l.* could be lost in so short a time.

When I come to speak of the expenses of a morning journal, where the income is very small, but “conducted,” as the phrase is, “with spirit,” they will not find any difficulty in believing that Mr. Murray had lost, in six months, the large sum of 15,000*l.* on his *Representative*. Indeed, we have had, within a few years, that conclusive proof which the Bankruptcy Court furnishes relative to the real facts of all the cases which come before it,—that a much larger sum than 15,000*l.*, may be lost on a new morning paper in six months. The reader will remember the commencement and close of the morning paper called the *Day*, which was started, a few years ago, chiefly with the money advanced by Lord Grosvenor, Lord Elcho, and several of their friends. Its politics were to be of a medium kind,—something between Liberalism on the one hand, and Conservatism on the other. The *Day* was a complete failure from the first. It had hardly any advertisements; and though the price was only a penny, it had but a very small circulation. And this state of things existed so long as the paper lasted, which was only seven weeks; yet the losses incurred on the enterprise were not less than 9000*l.* This, it will be seen, was something like double the amount—or 30,000*l.*—of Mr. Murray’s losses, due regard being had to the length of time the papers respectively existed. Of all gulfs ever heard of for swallowing up money, there are none so great as that of an unsuccessful morning paper.

It is generally believed that the *Representative* was

the first journal with which Mr. Disraeli was connected. That is a mistake. Some few years before, when he had not much exceeded his majority, and while his "Vivian Grey," his first work of fiction, had been but recently brought before the public, he had a small periodical of his own, partly political and partly literary. It was called the *Star Chamber*, which was an odd title to take, because it carried one back more than a century and a half, when the words conveyed the idea of everything that was despotic, cruel, and unjust. Mr. Disraeli's journal had none of these characteristics, unless they consisted in an unmerciful exposure and uncompromising denunciation of what he regarded as the follies and vices of fashionable society, mingled with unsparing severity in his notices of some of the leading works of the day. Cyrus Redding asserts, in one of his works, entitled "Fifty Years' Recollections, Literary and Political," that he attacked most of the literary men and women of merit, of the day. Mr. Cyrus Redding, who seemed to have no favourable feelings personally towards Mr. Disraeli, says he gave an eulogistic review in this publication of his own book, "Vivian Grey;" but he brings forward no evidence to substantiate his statement; and without evidence we are not called on to believe what he says. It is not at all improbable that, though "Vivian Grey" was reviewed with extravagant commendation in the *Star Chamber*, the review was written by some friend, who either may or may not have been acquainted with the

authorship. The *Star Chamber* never excited the slightest interest, and, consequently never had any circulation; nor is it probable that, if, instead of having been published anonymously, the authorship had been known, it would have been more successful, for Mr. Disraeli had no literary reputation at the time. The *Star Chamber* died, without making any sign, when it had reached the end of the second volume.

Among the metropolitan papers which are things of the past, the CONSTITUTIONAL deserves, on various accounts, a brief notice. It would merit a few words were it only because it was the first daily paper that was started after the reduction of the stamp duty in 1836. The projectors of the *Constitutional* purchased the *Public Ledger*, to which I shall have occasion to refer hereafter, and made it, in a great measure, the foundation on which they based their hopes of success, because it had at the time a fair share of advertisements, the greater portion of which they hoped to retain. It was, however, soon found that in this respect their superstructure of hope was built on a sandy foundation,—as will be seen towards the close of this notice.

The *Constitutional* was chiefly got up by Dr. Black—not the Mr. Black of the *Morning Chronicle*; but a gentleman well known at that time in the political world, who had before been the private Secretary as well as the personal friend of the late Sir William Molesworth, and who was, at the late election for the newly constituted borough of Hackney, the agent for

Mr. Holms, one of the two successful candidates out of the five that went to the poll. The *Constitutional* was ushered into existence under the somewhat imposing auspices of what professed to be "The Metropolitan Newspaper Company." Of whom or what that Company consisted, I never could get the least conceivable amount of reliable information.

The first number of the *Constitutional* appeared on the 15th September in 1836. Hopes were entertained, on reading its prospectus, that it would turn out to be a successful enterprise. Its political principles, without its committing itself to Chartism, at that time a rapidly growing cause, were more Liberal than those of any of the other morning papers; while a pledge was given that it would pursue a thoroughly independent course on all public questions, as well as on those which came under the category of politics. In addition to this, there was an announcement that the editorship of the paper would be in the hands of Mr. Laman Blanchard, who was at the time the most accomplished man known in the newspaper world for advanced political views. Mr. Laman Blanchard had this other recommendation in his favour,—that to a cultivated literary taste, and superior abilities as a political writer, he united gentlemanly and amiable manners. He was, too, on terms of great personal intimacy with Lord Lytton, then Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton; Sir William Molesworth, Douglas Jerrold, Mr. Thackeray, and others of high literary reputation as writers on the Liberal side of politics.



Yet with all these advantages the undertaking was a decided failure. Its great fault, viewed as a newspaper, was that it had too much of a literary character, considering the class to whom it was chiefly addressed. It could not, indeed, fail to have more than a sufficient amount of the literary element in it, when I state that the distinguished persons whose names I have mentioned as the personal friends of Mr. Laman Blanchard, were large contributors to its columns. Mr. Thornton Hunt too, one of the sons of Leigh Hunt, and now filling a high editorial position in connexion with the *Daily Telegraph*, brought as sub-editor, an accession of literary ability to the *Constitutional*. Mr. Thackeray had a regular engagement to write for it,—first as its Paris correspondent, and afterwards as foreign editor; but in the early expiration of the journal, we have another proof furnished to us, in addition to the many proofs which have gone before, that mere literary talent will never insure the success of any newspaper enterprise. There must be much tact on the part of the writing staff, in conjunction with business habits on the part of those who have the commercial department confided to them. Both these were wanting on the *Constitutional*. There was, too, another great—in a sense, a still greater—want in the case of that journal. It wanted capital. The whole amount of money which the proprietors could command was under 8000*l.*; and that sum, even had the literary and commercial staffs been all that could have been desired, could not have given

the paper even the chance of success. Had the *Constitutional* been making way, either in circulation or in advertisements, more capital might have been got, but so far from making progress in either sense, it was falling off in both respects. The circulation, small from the beginning, continued, after the paper had been in existence two or three months, steadily to decrease; while the advertisements, never numerous nor of what is called the "paying class," almost disappeared altogether. No one therefore will be surprised to learn, that the *Constitutional* had only a brief, and never a happy life. It quitted a world which it had found to be one only of trouble, after a sojourn in it of seven or eight months. On its decease Mr. Lee Stevens, the proprietor of the *Public Ledger*, resumed the title of that journal, numbering it so as to make it appear that there never had been a day's interruption to its publication as the *Public Ledger*. The present condition of the latter journal will be found described under the head of "Morning Papers," one of which it still claims to be.

The MORNING STAR, though not attaining to a fifth part of the length of life which the *Chronicle* and the *Herald* respectively reached, occupied a sufficiently prominent place in the political eye of the country to entitle it to some notice. It was started in 1856, on the abolition of the newspaper stamp duty. It was set on foot by the Manchester School class of politicians, under the direction of the late Mr. Richard Cobden and Mr. John Bright; but the former was by

far the most active in the matter. A great many of the Manchester School of politicians took shares in it, and Mr. Bright, without himself incurring any responsibility as a shareholder, is said to have raised 4500*l.* among his friends to set the paper afloat. The amount, it is added, was invested in the concern in the name of a relation. Mr. Cobden, for reasons which I have never heard assigned, declined to have any interest in the *Star*, as a shareholder; but he contributed 250*l.* as a gift to the fund which was raised for commencing and carrying on the publication. Mr. Cobden's notion was, that the great bulk of the people did not care for long leading articles, which he regarded as nothing better than dull disquisitions, or elaborate and heavy essays. This opinion he expressed on several occasions in the House of Commons; and, in accordance with it, he sought to impress on the Committee of Management of the *Star* that, instead of having three or four of those leading articles every day, or most days, they should only have one, and that this one should partake more of the character of a simple reference to the more important events of the day, than of general discussion on public questions. This was, with some modifications, made a feature of the *Star* at its commencement; but it was soon found that it would not answer. Not many months, not, indeed, many weeks, had elapsed before it was felt that the *Star* must resemble its contemporaries, in at least a great degree, with regard to its leading matter. The *Star* showed from the first con-

siderable ability, but it harped too much on the one string of free trade, as expounded by the leaders of the Manchester School. In fact, it was but the echo, day after day, of the sentiments of Messrs. Cobden and Bright, so long as the former lived. And with its unceasing advocacy of free trade principles, there was blended a scarcely less strenuous advocacy of the peace-at-any-price policy. The result was, that it became a thoroughly anti-British paper. Nothing, indeed, could be conceived more entirely anti-national than the course which the *Star* pursued. The consequence of an undeviating perseverance in this policy may easily be guessed. The paper was exceedingly unpopular. It received no support from the community generally, but was almost wholly dependent on the extreme upholders of free trade principles, in conjunction with those who were prepared at any time, and all times, to sacrifice the honour of the country to the practical assertion of their un-English views. No one, therefore, will be surprised when I mention, that while its penny contemporaries, the *Telegraph* and the *Standard* enjoyed a circulation,—the first of from 140,000 to 150,000 copies, and the other of from 120,000 to 130,000 copies daily,—the *Star*, including its evening edition, never reached 15,000 copies. Latterly, I am assured, it did not exceed from 10,000 to 12,000 copies. During its existence the *Star*, as was to be expected in a property so unprosperous as it was, repeatedly changed its proprietors and also its editors. Its last editor was

Mr. John Morley, now editor of the *Fortnightly Review*; and one of its last leading proprietors was Mr. Rawson, one of the principal proprietors, if not the principal proprietor of the *Manchester Times*. The losses by the publication of the *Star* were very great. I have heard them estimated at not less than 80,000*l*. I cannot vouch for the correctness of that amount, but I have the best authority for stating—the information having been given to me by a gentleman who had it direct from a leading proprietor,—that the year before the repeal of the duties on paper, the losses of the *Star* were not much, if at all, under 8000*l*. The abolition of the paper duties, in 1861, considerably, as a matter of course, reduced the losses of the *Star*, as it increased the profits of its contemporary penny journals which were paying; but still, till the last, the *Star* continued to be a seriously losing concern. It expired in 1870, after a troubled existence of fourteen years.

## CHAPTER XV.

### PRESENT METROPOLITAN DAILY PAPERS.

#### THE MORNING POST.

Its Commencement—Its Early History—"Parson Bate," one of its first Editors, Fights a savage Duel—Connexion with it of Samuel Taylor Coleridge—Sir James Mackintosh—Dr. Southey—Charles Lamb—Relations between Mr. Daniel Stuart, when Proprietor, and Mr. S. T. Coleridge—Changes in the Editorship and the Politics of the Paper—Its present Position.

I now come to those Morning Papers which, though established in the last century, still exist; and taking them in the order of their commencement, the first that demands my attention is the MORNING POST.

The *Morning Post*—which bore originally the additional title of "*and Daily Advertiser*," was started in the year 1772. In stating that the *Morning Post* was set on foot in 1772, it is necessary, to prevent mistakes, that I should show that the date of 1781, given in "Mitchell's Newspaper Directory"—usually very correct—cannot be the right one. First of all, the folio on the front page, which at the time I write is exactly "30,500," gives an anterior date to that given by Mr. Mitchell; and though that numbering of the *Post* does not carry us so far back as 1772, we have undoubted historic authority for the fact that



the origin of the paper could not under any circumstances have had a later date than I have mentioned. In my notice of the late *Morning Herald* I have stated, and will presently have to mention again, that the Rev. Henry Bate, commonly called the "gay and gallant Parson Bate," became editor of the *Post* in 1775, and we know that it had been established some time before his instalment in the editorial chair. As editor of the *Morning Post*, this "Parson Bate" fought a duel in 1777. The day of the month, nor even the month itself, is not given, but the year shows that Mr. Mitchell is in error in giving the year 1781 as that from which the *Morning Post* dates its commencement. This duel, it will be observed, was fought by Parson Bate *as* editor of that journal, and for offensive matter which he *as* editor had inserted in its columns. I am desirous of removing the error in the "Newspaper Directory" as to the time the first number of the *Post* appeared, because Mr. Mitchell's publication has a large sale, and is justly regarded as an excellent authority on newspaper statistics.

I have no doubt that "Mitchell's Directory" has fallen into its error by copying "Haydn's Book of Dates,"—usually a reliable authority—as in that work the year 1782 is given as the year in which the *Morning Post* was commenced. The *Post* is thus proved to be within a few months of its centenary anniversary. To live a century is a great thing for a newspaper; for I venture to say, that not one newspaper in a thousand has been able to boast of

such a longevity. It would be an edifying piece of information, could we have access to it, what the number is of newspapers, including the various intervals of publication, which have sprung into existence to live for a little time and then sicken and die, since the *Morning Post* was born a century ago, with the deduction of a few months. It is due to that journal to say, that venerable as it is for age, it shows no signs of decay or decrepitude. On the contrary, if appearances be not deceptive, it is not only as vigorous, but more vigorous than ever. Insurance companies do not, I believe, assure the lives of newspapers. As a rule, they would run a great risk if they did. But the *Morning Post*, were that within the scope of their business, would be regarded as what is called "a good life." So that if it can boast of a great longevity in relation to the past, it has every reason to calculate on a yet longer life to come.

The *Morning Post* was, as I have shown, established in 1772, and in a form which it was hoped by the projectors would enable them to evade the stamp duty, but in this they were mistaken, and were obliged to make it the same as other papers. I have not obtained any information on which I could rely as to who were its originators, or who were its principal proprietors at its commencement; but, as I have said, one of its earliest editors was the Rev. Henry Bate, commonly called "Parson Bate," to whom I have alluded before as afterwards Sir Henry Bate Dudley. I refer the reader to my notice

of the late *Morning Herald* for some curious particulars, which I have there furnished respecting this very erratic man. I have mentioned amongst others of his eccentricities, especially when it is remembered that he was a clergyman, that he had in the course of his strange career been engaged in several duels. One of these, while editor of the *Morning Post*, was of so extraordinary a character that it deserves to be recorded. But before doing so, it is proper to state that this was not the one which he fought after being raised to the baronetcy, and receiving an important living in the Church, and being appointed a justice of the peace in three English and four Irish counties. And yet though this fighting parson thus set both ecclesiastical and civil law at defiance, I have not found that punishment of any kind was inflicted on him, either by his ecclesiastical superiors or by the civil courts. It is sad to think that such things could be, yet they were in Sir Henry Bate Dudley's day; and unhappily they are so in ours.

The duel I have alluded to as being fought by this clerical admirer of "the laws of honour," as they were then generally accepted by persons moving in what was termed good society, had so much of the sanguinary character—then called coolness and courage—about it, that I think it worthy of quotation as it is given in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of January 13th, 1777:—"A rencontre," says the journal just named, "happened at the Adelphi Tavern, in the Strand, between Captain Stoney and Mr. Bate,

editor of the *Morning Post*. The cause of quarrel arose from some offensive paragraphs that had appeared in the *Morning Post*, highly reflecting on the character of a lady, for whom Captain Stoney had a particular regard. Mr. Bate had taken every possible method consistent with honour to convince Mr. Stoney that the insertion of the paragraphs was wholly without his knowledge, to which Mr. Stoney gave no credit, and insisted on the satisfaction of a gentleman, or the discovery of the author. This happened some days before; but meeting, as it were, by accident on the day here mentioned, they adjourned to the Adelphi, called for a room, shut the door, and being furnished with pistols, discharged them at each other without effect. They then drew swords, and Mr. Stoney received a wound in the breast and arm, and Mr. Bate one in the thigh. Mr. Bate's sword bent, and slanted against the Captain's breast-bone, which Mr. Bate apprising him of, Captain Stoney called to him to straighten it; and in the interim, while the sword was under his foot for that purpose, the door was broken open, or the death of one of the parties would most certainly have been the issue."

The reader cannot fail to have been struck with the number of actions for libel which, about the time the *Post* started, and for years afterwards, were brought against the newspapers. The *Morning Post* had its share of them; but in the year 1791 there was one of these which conjointly, because of its

nature and the amount of damages given by the jury, created unusual interest among all classes, and in all parts of the country. The action was brought by Lady Elizabeth Lambert, daughter of the Dowager Countess of Cavan, in consequence of a charge being preferred against her of criminal intercourse with a military officer. The jury gave a verdict for 4000*l.* damages. This was perhaps the largest amount of damages ever given in any court of justice in a civil case of the kind. I do not, indeed, remember any equally heavy amount of damages being given in any case at all. In the time of the Stuarts and Star Chamber, fines of 10,000*l.*, 5000*l.*, and sums of intermediate amount, in addition to the pillory, imprisonment for life, or long terms of years, were imposed on those who were bold enough to beard the despotic government of the day. But I repeat, I do not remember a purely civil case in which so large an amount of damages was given by a jury, as Lady Elizabeth Lambert obtained on this occasion from the *Morning Post*. The publication of the proceedings in the case, in conjunction with the enormous amount of the damages for which the verdict was given, very seriously injured the property, and had, it is believed, much to do with its lower circulation for years afterwards.

I do not know who succeeded "Parson Bate" in the editorship of the *Morning Post*, or whether there may not have been several editors in the interval; but certainly, it must have been very badly conducted, for in 1795 the copyright of the paper, with

the house in which it was printed, and the presses and printing materials, were sold for the small sum of 600*l.*—small for a morning paper—to Peter and Daniel Stuart, two Scotch brothers. Daniel was the managing man, and is always spoken of as if he had been the *Morning Post* embodied in his own person. When the brothers Stuart bought the property the circulation was only 350 copies per day. The marvel is that with so poor a circulation it should have lingered on so long. Mr. Daniel Stuart, however, had no sooner become half proprietor and entire manager, than he put his mental as well as his pecuniary resources into operation with the view of raising the character and circulation of the paper, not forgetting the great point of increasing the number of the advertisements. Among the earliest contributors he engaged to write leading articles for the paper, were Mr. James Mackintosh, afterwards Sir James Mackintosh; and Mr. Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It is the general belief that the first newspaper with which Mr. Coleridge was connected was the *Morning Chronicle*; and the next the *Morning Post*. This is a mistake; he had, some years before his connexion either with the *Morning Chronicle* or *Morning Post*, been not only the editor, but the proprietor of a political weekly journal in Bristol. Its name was the *Watchman*, and it was started for the purpose of advocating Liberal principles both in politics and religion. I should here observe that Coleridge was at this time an advanced Unitarian, in which capacity



he preached for several years in the Unitarian chapel in Taunton. It is right I should add, that he not only abjured Unitarianism — which, afterwards he always called Socinianism — but he became a thorough Trinitarian and Evangelical in every sense of the words. Yet there was, till the latest hour of his life a tendency, which could not be sufficiently deplored, to soar into regions of unrevealed truth. With the view of procuring a sufficient number of subscribers, to insure, as he thought, the success of his enterprise, he made, on foot, a personal tour through the provinces, soliciting the names of subscribers, just as we now see book-hawkers canvassing all parts of the country for subscribers to particular publications. The *Watchman* made its appearance as the property, and under the editorship of Mr. Coleridge; but it was a complete failure. Its existence closed with the publication of the ninth number.

Coleridge, in two or three years after he had formed a connexion with the *Morning Post*, was appointed editor of both the literary and political departments of that paper. On that point I shall have to speak presently. In the meantime I may mention, that Mr. Coleridge and Mr. Mackintosh, afterwards Sir James Mackintosh, were not only employed at this time on the *Morning Post*, but they had been personal friends. Unhappily, however, there followed an estrangement in consequence of an incident which occurred at the house of a mutual friend in the vicinity of Bristol; and though a seeming recon-

ciliation took place, it never was cordial. Mackintosh, while professing great friendship for Coleridge, proved in various ways that it wanted sincerity; while Coleridge was generally ready to furnish unmistakable proofs that his professed friendship for Mackintosh was not real. Within the last few minutes evidence of this, so far as relates to Coleridge, has come under my eye. Speaking of Mackintosh, Coleridge says in his "Table Talk," "After all his fluency and critical erudition, you can rarely carry off anything worth preserving. You might not improperly write on his forehead 'House to let.' "

But this was not the only proof which Coleridge furnished of his personal dislike to Mackintosh, arising it may be, from a statement made by Mr. Stuart to the effect that in a brilliant intellectual company at the house near Bristol to which I have referred—Cote House, in which resided two brothers named Wedgewood—Mackintosh completely vanquished Coleridge, to the infinite mortification of the latter, in what Shakspeare calls "A keen encounter of the wits." "Coleridge," says Mr. Stuart, "overwhelmed listeners in, as he said with reference to Madame de Staël, a monologue; but at sharp cut-and-thrust fencing, by a master like Mackintosh, he was speedily confused and subdued." Stuart assures us that Coleridge never forgave Mackintosh for thus showing himself off as superior in argument. Be that as it may, there can be no question that Coleridge not only showed himself ungrateful for the acts of friend-

ship which Mackintosh had done him, but as being influenced by feelings towards Mackintosh which cannot be otherwise spoken of than as malevolent. Stuart says, in a letter addressed to the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1838:—“Among other poems, Coleridge sent one to me attacking Mackintosh too obviously for me not to understand it, and of course it was not published. Mackintosh had one of his front teeth broken, and the stump was black. The poem described a hungry, pert Scotchman, with little learning but much brass, with a black tooth in front, indicative of the blackness of his heart.” One cannot but regret that such a man as Coleridge, with an amount of intellectuality which one rarely meets with in our age, should have been capable of committing so coarse and heartless a personality as this. In early life he was sadly troubled with his teeth, and when more advanced in years, and had become Sir James Mackintosh, he suffered so much from them, and they became so unsightly, that he was obliged to have them all extracted, and their place supplied by an artificial set. As no one knew better than Coleridge that he was very sensitive on the subject of his teeth, that circumstance made the poem to which I have referred all the more in bad taste and bad feeling on the part of Coleridge. Speaking of Mackintosh's teeth, I may mention that, when Sir James, he had one day attended a public meeting on a great national question at the Freemasons' Hall, which was crowded, chiefly because a great speech was expected

from Sir James ; he rose, amidst breathless silence, to make his speech, but had not uttered a dozen sentences before he suddenly resumed his seat, and remained in a state of perfect silence and quite motionless. The meeting were filled with alarm, fearing he had been seized with a fit or some other form of illness which might then and there prove fatal. He did not attempt to resume his speech, but the fact soon spread through the crowded assembly that nothing more serious had happened to Sir James, than that some derangement had taken place in the artificially dental condition of his mouth, which rendered it impossible for him to proceed further with his speech. One who was present told me that, some years before his death, Lord Brougham was one evening in the midst of one of his most impassioned speeches in the House of Lords when a very inconvenient motion took place in his artificial teeth ; but instead of resuming his seat as Sir James Mackintosh did, he pulled them out and held them in his closed hand, proceeding with his speech as if nothing had happened, only that his articulation was so indistinct that it was difficult to understand a word he said, and consequently the effect of his oration was entirely spoiled.

For some two or three years Coleridge had no regular engagement or salary in connexion with the *Post*. He was a mere occasional though frequent contributor, and was paid for each article. But towards the end of 1799 Stuart and he entered into a

regular engagement with each other that Coleridge should be the editor of the paper. There is a discrepancy as to which of the two parties made the advance to the other. Coleridge says that the proposal was made by Stuart, and that he would only accept the offer—whatever it may have been, for nothing is said on the subject—on condition that he should not be interfered with in any way in the expression of his views on political questions. Stuart, on the other hand, asserts that the offer of his editorial services came from Coleridge. The statements not only differ, but are in direct opposition to each other. I shall have occasion to return to this point hereafter, and shall state the reasons why I am more inclined to credit the version of Coleridge than that of Stuart.

There is one incident which occurred during the connexion of Coleridge with the *Morning Post* which I ought to notice. Mr. Stuart, as will be afterwards seen, complained that he scarcely got any work out of Coleridge. On this point I shall have to say something hereafter. In the meantime I content myself with saying, that it was not his—Mr. Stuart's—fault if the fact was so, for he actually sought to make Coleridge, at the time he was known to be in bad health, a Parliamentary reporter as well as editor, and this without adding to Coleridge's salary. The circumstances under which the initiatory step was taken by Mr. Stuart in this matter, are thus given by Gillman in his "Life of Coleridge":—"Coleridge," says Mr. Gillman, "was requested by

the proprietor and editor to report a speech of Pitt's, which at this time was expected to be one of great *éclat*. Accordingly, early in the morning, off Coleridge set, carrying with him the supplies for the campaign. Those who are acquainted with the gallery of the House on a press night, when a man can scarcely find elbow room, will better understand how incompetent Coleridge was for such an undertaking. He, however, started by seven in the morning, but was exhausted long before night. Mr. Pitt, for the first quarter of an hour, spoke fluently and in his usual manner, and sufficiently to give a notion of his best style. This was followed by a repetition of words, and words only. He appeared to talk against time, as the phrase is. Coleridge fell asleep, and listened occasionally only to the speeches that followed. On his return, the proprietor being anxious for the report, Coleridge informed him of the result, and finding his anxiety great, immediately volunteered a speech for Mr. Pitt, which he wrote offhand, and which answered the purpose exceedingly well. The following day, and for days after its publication, the proprietor received complimentary letters announcing the pleasure received at the report, and wishing to know the reporter. The secret was, however, kept, and the real author of the speech concealed; but one day Mr. Canning, calling on business, made similar inquiries, and received the same answer. Canning replied, 'It does more credit to the author's head than to his memory.' "



Mr. Stuart, it is right to state, gives a somewhat different version of this story, but not with regard to its leading incidents. He also admits that his memory in relation to some points may be at fault,—an admission which he makes in reference to various other circumstances connected with Coleridge and other contributors who afterwards became eminent men in the world of literature,—to his two papers, the *Morning Post* and the *Courier*. In carefully trying to get at the truth of the conflicting statements of Stuart and Coleridge respecting their newspaper connexion with each other, Coleridge has an undoubted right to the benefit of Stuart's admission, repeatedly made, that his—Stuart's—memory was not always to be trusted.

It is strange that no one seems to have ascertained the real cause of Coleridge's unwillingness to work, his lethargy, and his uncertain conduct in regard to literary labour during all the time that Mr. Stuart and he were connected together in newspaper journalism. It seems to have been the prevalent belief that all this was to be solely ascribed to a kind of constitutional indolence, which had obtained a lamentable mastery over him. A writer, in the latest edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," gives expression to this belief:—"In," he says, "his best days the poet-philosopher never possessed that capacity for steady, persistent, punctual labour which is the sinew of periodical literature, and for the want of which we have all of us seen names synonymous

with genius, become symbols of failure." That there may have been some amount of constitutional indolence in Coleridge, I am not prepared to deny; but that was not the chief cause of the lethargy and slothfulness which at times were characteristic of his conduct as a periodical writer. The principal cause, it seems clear to me, was the extent to which he indulged in opium-eating. There were other causes, no doubt, but even they were the results, more or less directly, of this awful habit. In a letter to a friend, written in 1807, he refers to his circumstances, after alluding to the loss of half of the yearly allowance which he then received from a friend, in the following doleful terms:—"I am to be penniless, resourceless, in heavy debt, my health and spirits absolutely broken down, and with scarce a friend in the world." The full meaning of this language is brought out in a letter which Coleridge wrote in 1814 to Mr. Cottle, the friend just alluded to, author of "Early Recollections of the late Samuel Taylor Coleridge." In this letter Coleridge states that for ten years—that is, from the year 1804—the anguish of his spirit had been indescribable, the sense of his danger staring, and the consciousness of his guilt worse than all. "I have prayed," he adds, "with drops of blood on my brow. Overwhelmed as I am with a sense of my direful infirmity, I have never attempted to conceal the cause. On the contrary, not only to friends have I stated the whole case with tears and the very bitterness of shame, but in two instances I have

warned young men, mere acquaintances, who had spoken of having taken laudanum, of the direful consequences, by an awful exposition of its tremendous effects on myself."

This was in the year 1814. The marvel is that with the quantities of laudanum which Coleridge systematically took, he could have lived from one month to another. Mr. Cottle says that the effect had been so dreadful upon him, that his whole body was completely paralysed. He could not hold a glass of wine, not even when he held it in his two hands, without its so shaking as that the contents were spilled.

And it was not merely that poor Coleridge was a slave to opium, but he was so to an extent which Mr. Cottle, his intimate and sincere friend, assures us has no known parallel. "He has been," says Mr. Cottle, "long, very long, in the habit of taking from two quarts of laudanum a week to a pint a day. On one occasion he drank a whole quart of laudanum in twenty-four hours." This statement throws a light on Coleridge's nervousness and prostration, and unfitness for literary or any other labour when editorially connected with the *Morning Post*, which, so far as my knowledge extends, was never fully seen before. That he was, when more advanced in life, a melancholy slave to the use of opium was known to all who knew anything of his life, but neither Mr. Stuart, though in constant communication with him, nor any of his most intimate private friends,

appear to have had the slightest idea until the year 1814, that he was thus the veriest slave to laudanum drinking. It must have been when crushed by the weight of his consciousness of this terrible slavery that he penned the following lamentable language: "The temptation I have constantly to fight against is a fear that if annihilation and the possibility of heaven were offered to my choice, I should choose the former." I advert to this in a special manner, and at greater length than I should otherwise have done, for the purpose of explaining what would otherwise be inexplicable,—the constant complaints made by Mr. Stuart, the proprietor of the *Morning Post*, in whose editorial service he was the first two years of the century, of the little service he obtained for what he admits was the small salary which Coleridge received from him. What the amount of this "small salary" was Mr. Stuart does not inform us; nor, so far as I have been able to learn from the various books I have consulted in reference to Coleridge's early life, has the specific salary ever transpired. I see it assumed by one writer, that Coleridge's salary was only a guinea a week. But no verification of the accuracy of this statement is given; it is not, indeed, even pretended that any authority for it exists. My belief is that the thing is a mere supposition founded on the fact that Mr. Daniel Stuart had a brother, Peter Stuart, proprietor of the *Oracle*, which at that time possessed a moderate circulation, and some influence, and that he asked the Scotch poet, Robert Burns, to become a con-

tributor to it, offering him a regular engagement at a guinea a week. Burns indignantly rejected the offer; and Daniel Stuart, the proprietor of the *Morning Post*, in relation to the poet's doing so, expressed himself in these terms: "We hear much of purse-proud insolence, but poets can sometimes be insolent in the conscious power of talents, as well as vulgar upstarts can be in the conscious power of their purse. The employment offered Burns by my brother would surely have been more honourable than that of excise gauger."

But it does not follow that because Daniel Stuart, proprietor of the *Morning Post*, thought that a guinea a week was a reasonable rate of remuneration for contributions to the *Oracle*, his brother's newspaper,—that would be all that he would give to Coleridge for his services to his own paper, the *Morning Post*. The two cases were quite different. Burns was in Scotland, fulfilling his functions as an exciseman, and necessarily having nothing to do with the editorship of the *Oracle*; whereas Coleridge had at the time the sole editorial control of the literary and political departments of the *Morning Post*. The idea, therefore, of the latter being paid by Mr. Stuart, as it was proposed by his brother to pay Robert Burns, is not for a moment to be entertained. Besides, we have, by implication, Coleridge's own statement, that whatever may have been the salary which he received as editor of the *Morning-Post*, it could not have been the miserable amount of a guinea a week; for he distinctly states in one of his letters to a friend, that his

weekly salary was sufficient, though barely, to supply his weekly wants; which it could not have been had it only been a guinea per week. That wretched remuneration would not have sufficed to pay for his lodgings, however humble, and provided the clothes becoming a gentleman moving in society, which we know Coleridge was doing at this time. There can be no doubt, from the frequent admissions of Mr. Stuart himself, that he was very inadequately remunerated for his editorial services; but because this is not to be denied, that is no reason why we should run to the other extreme, and conclude that his salary was only a guinea a week,—not much more than the wages of a common day-labourer.

But the subject is one in connexion with the interests of literature towards the end of last century, and the beginning of the present, which it will be well to enter into somewhat fully.

A controversy has occurred between the friends of Coleridge since his death, and Mr. Stuart, proprietor of the *Morning Post*, during the connexion of the former with that journal, in relation to the share which he had in raising its circulation. That is still a question which excites much interest in the literary world. I have read all I have had access to which has been written on the subject, and I confess myself unable to come to any confident conclusion on the point at issue. In his "Table Talk" Coleridge states, that in one year he had raised the sale of the *Morning Post* from a small number to 7000 copies daily.



The "small number," though not anywhere specifically stated by Coleridge, we know from Mr. Stuart's statement, he being the party who purchased the property, to have been 350 copies daily. Mr. Henry Coleridge, nephew of Mr. Coleridge, in the "Life and Remains of S. T. Coleridge," repeats and indorses this statement of his uncle. Mr. Stuart, indignant at this and at some other things which Mr. Gillman had said, in his "Recollections of Coleridge," entered, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1838, into all the particulars relative to his connexion with Coleridge; but no more with regard to many other points, than to the one as to the extent to which Coleridge contributed to the sudden and great increase in the prosperity of the *Morning Post*. The statements are so conflicting that it is impossible to do more than approximate to the real facts of the case.

In reference to the statement made by Coleridge that he had, in one year, raised the circulation of the *Post* "from a small number,"—350 copies daily—to 7000 copies, that I am able to state, from well ascertained facts, is a great exaggeration. Of that there can be no doubt. No morning paper ever attained a circulation of even 5000 copies for many years afterwards. The *Morning Post* never had a circulation exceeding at the highest 4500 copies, from its commencement in 1772, to the present day,—a period embracing, within a few months, an entire century. No doubt Coleridge believed his own statement. The

*Post* had undoubtedly been exceedingly prosperous during the two years and upwards that its political and literary departments were under his editorial auspices; and his fancy would, under the circumstances, find it a very easy thing to transform fictions into facts.

But when Coleridge adds to his statement that he had raised the *Post* in one year from 350 to 7000 copies,—that he had received but a small recompense for his services, while Mr. Stuart was riding in his carriage, it is proved beyond all question, that he spoke the exact truth. Some of Mr. Coleridge's friends, in their publications relative to him, after his death, have represented him as saying, that "Stuart was riding in his carriage while I was starving in a garret."

This was equally injudicious on the part of his friends who wish his memory to be revered, and at variance with the fact, so far as the "starving in a garret" is concerned.

But it is true, that Coleridge received a most inadequate amount of remuneration for his labours. Though, as I have already mentioned, the precise sum he received has never transpired, I have made it clear from Mr. Stuart's own admissions, that it was very small,—no more indeed, as Coleridge says, than sufficed to meet his daily necessities, which must have been of the humblest kind.

Stuart complains, as a justification of his only allowing a "small salary" to Coleridge, that even

small as it was, he considered that he did not receive a sufficient equivalent for it. He says that, according to the best of his recollection, writing twenty years after the period referred to, Coleridge did not send him more than ten or twelve pieces in eight months. "It is true," Mr. Stuart adds, "that, conscious of his deficiency, Southey supplied a most satisfactory quantity, for, I believe, the small salary went to Mrs. Coleridge." Mrs. Coleridge, it ought here to be mentioned was Southey's sister-in-law, Southey and he having married two sisters in Bath,—a fact which Byron satirically alluded to in "Don Juan" in the following lines:—

Or Coleridge, long before his flighty pen  
 Let to the *Morning Post's* aristocracy,  
 When he and Southey, following the same path,  
 Espoused two sisters,—milliners at Bath.

One has no right to express in so many terms an absolute doubt of the truth of Stuart's statement, that Coleridge should only have furnished, though a salaried contributor, ten or twelve short pieces to the *Post* in eight months; but it certainly does seem strange, notwithstanding the literary aid afforded him by Southey, that such "a very knowing man" as Stuart, to use Coleridge's expression some years afterwards, should have retained one so habitually indolent on his establishment. The statement of Stuart is still more difficult to be believed when we have his own words for the fact, that in little more than a year after this, he engaged Coleridge as sole editor of the literary

and political departments of the *Post*. This was very unlike what might have been expected on the part of a shrewd business man like Mr. Stuart, who, after an eight months' trial of what Coleridge could or would do, could only get ten or twelve short pieces out of him. And the correctness of the statement of Stuart, that Coleridge had only supplied the mere morsel of literary and political matter which the former mentions, becomes doubly doubtful when I quote Stuart's own words, after stating that he had appointed Coleridge editor of the paper:—"I agreed to allow him my largest salary." No doubt Stuart does not say what the amount of his "largest salary" was, any more than he informs us what the amount of the "small salary" which Coleridge received from the proprietors of the *Post* in the previous case was; but still, as he placed in Coleridge's hands the entire editorship of the paper, and gave him "his largest salary" in return for his services, the man must, indeed, belong to those of great instead of "little faith," who could believe that so shrewd and practical a Scotchman as Mr. Daniel Stuart was known to be, would make such an engagement as this with one who had proved himself so slothful when before engaged as a writer on his paper.

My own conviction, after giving all possible attention to the conflicting statements of Mr. Coleridge and Mr. Daniel Stuart, is that the former was most inadequately paid for his services, first as contributor, and afterwards as editor of the *Morning Post*. And

that inadequacy was made all the greater morally, because Mr. Stuart again and again admits—what indeed was universally known at the time to be a fact—that the *Morning Post* was a most prosperous property during the period of Coleridge's connexion with it. Having a very good idea of what the expenses of getting up a morning paper of the size of the *Post*, in the beginning of the century, were, and what, too, were the amount of the circulation and the number of the advertisements of the paper in question, I have no hesitation in saying that the yearly profits at this time must have been from 5000*l.* to 6000*l.* Though, therefore, Stuart may have paid Coleridge the sum agreed on as the weekly salary of the latter, it was ungracious, ungenerous, if not legally unjust, to grind poor Coleridge down so low as that he should be constrained to write that all he received for labours which, in the belief of friends, wasted the pride and manhood of his intellect without adding to his reputation, should have barely sufficed to supply the necessities of the week.

On the other hand, I must admit that so far as relates to the share which Coleridge had in raising the circulation of the *Morning Post*, Mr. Stuart has decidedly the advantage in this conflict of statements and assertions. Mr. Stuart was only proprietor of the *Morning Post* for eight years altogether. It was in the autumn of 1795 that it came into Mr. Stuart's hand with the poor circulation of 350 copies per day. In the spring of 1797, that is, in about eighteen

months, and before Coleridge had formed an editorial connexion with the paper, which was in 1799, the sale had exceeded 2000 copies daily. In 1802 Coleridge ceased to write in any way for the *Post*, and in the year 1803 Mr. Stuart sold it,—by which time the circulation had reached 4500 copies per day. Mr. Stuart adds to this statement, that no other morning paper had a sale at this time of 3000 copies. The *Morning Chronicle* was the next highest in circulation to the *Post*. The circulation of the other morning journals,—the *Times*, the *Morning Herald*, and the *Morning Advertiser* varied from, in round numbers, 1000 to 2500 copies per day. The facts of the case as between Mr. Stuart and Mr. Coleridge are, to cut the matter short,—that the former was an intelligent and enterprising Scotchman, who threw all the energies and tact of his countrymen into the management of the *Morning Post*,—and this I look upon as the chief cause of the signal success of that journal; while, on the other hand, the brilliant articles which, from time to time, appeared from the pen of Coleridge, co-operated in a very great measure to achieve that signal success. One remarkable paper from the pen of Coleridge, on the character of Pitt, created, in 1800, as Mr. Stuart himself admits, quite a sensation,—even such a sensation that the impression containing the article continued to sell for some weeks,—a thing unprecedented; and the fact proves of itself that Coleridge had something to do with the extraordinary success of the *Post*, though not to the extent which he asserted.



Before I quit the subject of Coleridge's connexion with the *Morning Post*, there are some facts which I feel a special pleasure in being able to establish, because they are most honourable to his memory, but which, strange to say, I have not seen brought fully out either in the works of his friends Cottle and Gillman, or in those of his nephew, Mr. Henry Coleridge; nor indeed in his own "Table Talk," or his "Literaria Biographia." The facts to which I refer are brought to light by no other than Mr. Daniel Stuart himself, between whom and the relations and friends of Coleridge all the conflicting statements and acrimonious controversies to which I have been referring, have taken place. It will be remembered that before Coleridge formed his editorial connexion with the *Morning Post* he distinctly stated that Mr. Stuart had applied to him to accept the political and literary editorship of that paper. Stuart, on the other hand, declared in the most emphatic terms, that so far from his applying to Coleridge, the application was made by him to Stuart. These are two statements of the most conflicting kind, and did the matter rest there, the reader would be at a loss to decide which he ought to believe. But the matter admits of being placed in such a light that there will remain no longer the slightest room or reason for doubt. Coleridge, it will be recollected, states emphatically that before he would accept the office when offered to him, he distinctly stipulated that he should not be interfered with in any way as to the political course he

would adopt. Stuart gives a direct denial to this, by saying that Coleridge knew what the politics of the paper were, and that it was besides absurd to suppose that he would have allowed an editor to have the control of its policy. Now it admits of the most conclusive proof that Coleridge, even in the periods of his greatest pecuniary pressure, not only would not have consented, if he had been asked, to write contrary to his convictions on great questions of the day, but that, before making *any* journalistic engagement, he expressly stipulated that he must give utterance to his own honest views. In relation to some negotiations that were in 1809 pending between him and the proprietors of the *Courier*, of which journal Mr. Stuart was the chief proprietor, he writes to Mr. Stuart as follows:—"I could *not* write in any strict harmony with the line predominant in the leading paragraphs [leading articles] of late. However, if he [Mr. Street, Mr. Stuart's co-proprietor] thought that what *I*, with my principles as anti-Jacobin, anti-Bonaparte, &c., as his own, but with a dread and contempt of the present Ministry only less than that of the last, would be serviceable, I would undertake to furnish him with two columns twice a week for the next twelve weeks." Here is one proof of the most conclusive kind, not only that Coleridge was an honest man as a political writer, but that he stipulated, before accepting a journalistic engagement, that he should be allowed to advocate his own views. We are not only then justified in believing but bound to believe

the statement of Coleridge, in opposition to that of Mr. Stuart, when the former says that the editorship of the *Morning Post* was offered to him by Stuart, not sought by him, and that before he would accept the proposal, he made it a *sine quâ non* that no attempt should be made to influence him in relation to the views which the *Post* should advocate.

I might give other proofs of the sterling honesty of Coleridge as a journalist, and as one who, whenever he made an engagement to write for a paper stipulated, as he said he did when Stuart applied to him to become political and literary editor of that journal,—that he should not be interfered with as to the manner in which he would conduct it,—I might, I say, furnish other proofs of this, but I will only give one more. Writing to Mr. Stuart in 1816, in relation to a series of articles on Catholic Emancipation, in relation to which there had been some correspondence between them, Coleridge says:—"With regard to the Catholic Question, if I write I must be allowed to express the truth and the whole truth. On this condition I will write immediately." Here then we have presumptive evidence that where Coleridge's statements are at variance with Stuart's his is to be preferred, unless there be some special reason for believing the latter. We have other evidence which is not to be disputed, that Coleridge was a thoroughly honest man in his journalistic capacity, and would never write for any monetary consideration contrary to his own convictions. It were well if all other journalists were

equally upright in this respect. It will be a source of great pride and pleasure to his friends and his very numerous admirers, to see it thus conclusively proved that he possessed this estimable quality.

Coleridge died at Highgate, in the house of his friend Mr. Gillman, in the sixty-second year of his age, in the full faith of the Gospel, as understood in the evangelical sense of the word; and showing all the humility of a child blended with a brilliancy of intellect which, in his moments of freedom from pain, till the last seemed to all who witnessed it almost superhuman.

Among the stated contributors to the *Morning Post* for the greater portion of the period during which Mr. Stuart was the proprietor, was Charles Lamb. But, strange to say, the former speaks of Lamb as altogether unfitted for newspaper work. Yet, while poor Charles Lamb was thus spoken of in disparaging terms by Stuart, the then proprietor of the *Morning Post*, he wrote in this kindly language to a friend respecting Mr. Stuart:—"He ever appeared to us one of the finest tempered of editors,—frank, plain, and English all over." What does the reader suppose was the rate of remuneration which Charles Lamb received for the "writing" which Mr. Stuart, as proprietor of the *Post* speaks of in the depreciatory terms which I have just quoted? Why, a poor, miserable sixpence for each paragraph! How could Mr. Stuart have expected to get an article of even passably good quality for such wretched pay as this? Sixpence

for a paragraph which was expected to be characterized by genuine humour, or refined wit, from the pen of Charles Lamb! Why, the most veritable penny-a-liner of the present day, who deals in nothing but "words, words, words," as Hamlet says, gets his three-halfpence per line. He gets that amount for recording the origin, progress, and consummation of a fire, or the proceedings of a coroner's inquest on the body of some old woman in the lowest locality of London, who died from the effects of an over attachment to the contents of the gin bottle.

There is the same discrepancy between the statements of Mr. Stuart and Charles Lamb with regard to the connexion of the latter with the *Morning Post* as there is between Mr. Stuart and Coleridge in relation to the connexion of the latter with the same journal. Mr. Stuart, it will be remembered, from a quotation I have given from a letter of his, in speaking of the *Courier*, expressed himself regarding Charles Lamb in these terms:—"As for good Charles Lamb I never could make anything of his writings. Of politics he knew nothing, and his drollery was vapid when given in short paragraphs fit for a newspaper." No other inference could be drawn from this language than that Lamb's connexion with the *Post* had been both slight and short-lived. Throughout what Lamb says of the *Post* in his "Newspapers Thirty-Five Years Ago," he speaks of himself as being a literary fixture and a close working man on that journal, from the time he became connected with it, in 1800,

until Mr. Stuart sold it in 1803. Charles Lamb, in the following passage from the paper from his pen, which I have just named, assuredly leaves the reader to conclude that he not only was a man of greater newspaper capacity than Mr. Stuart represents him to have been, but that he had a fixed and recognised position in the literary department of the *Morning Post*, until Mr. Stuart sold the paper. The newspaper to which Lamb was, to use his own word, "transferred" from the *Post*, was the *Albion*,—an evening paper at that time of bad reputation, and very small circulation. Lamb says its circulation at this time only amounted to 100 copies daily—of no influence, and ruinous in a commercial point of view. "From," says Charles Lamb, "the office of the *Morning Post*, by change in the property of the paper, we were transferred—mortifying exchange!—to the office of the *Albion* newspaper, like Rackstraw's Museum in Fleet Street. What a transition! From a handsome apartment, from rosework desks, and silver inkstands to an office—no office, but a *den* rather, but just redeemed from the occupation of dead monsters, of which it seemed redolent—from the centre of loyalty and fashion, to a focus of vulgarity and sedition! There in a musty closet, inadequate from its square contents to the receipt of the two bodies of editor and humble paragraph-maker, together at one time, sat in the discharge of his new editorial functions—the 'Bigod' of Elia,—the redoubted John Fenwick."



I repeat that no one who reads this from the pen of Charles Lamb himself, can put any faith in the statement of Mr. Stuart, that he never could make anything of Lamb's writings; that he knew nothing of politics, and that his drollery was vapid when given in short paragraphs fit for a newspaper. If this had really been Stuart's opinion of Lamb he would not have retained him for three years as part of the literary staff of the *Morning Post*, and only parted with him when he parted with the paper.

This manifest variance with the facts of the case, given in Stuart's version of his newspaper connexion with Charles Lamb, cannot fail to have the effect of leading all thoughtful readers to receive with distrust his representations relative to Coleridge, when injurious to the memory of the latter.

Charles Lamb's connexion with the *Morning Post* commenced in the year 1800, through a letter of introduction written to Mr. Stuart by Mr. Coleridge. Lamb has left us in his "Recollections of Newspapers Thirty-Five Years Ago,"—which now relate to a period between seventy and eighty years since—some very amusing reminiscences of newspaper life at the close of the last and commencement of the present century. Speaking of the department on the *Oracle* assigned to a schoolfellow of his own, whom he calls Bob Allen, which was like his own on the *Post*,—that of brief and witty paragraphs, he says:—"While we were ringing out coy sprightliness for the *Post*, and writing under the toil of what is called 'easy

writing,' Bob Allen, our quondam schoolfellow, was tapping his impracticable brains in a like service for the *Oracle*. Not that Robert troubled himself much about wit. If his paragraphs had a sprightly air about them it was sufficient. He carried this nonchalance so far at last, that a matter of intelligence; and that no very important one, was not seldom palmed upon his employers as a good jest. For example sake,—'Walking yesterday morning casually down Snow Hill, who should we meet but Mr. Deputy Humphrys! We rejoice to add that the worthy Deputy appeared to enjoy a good state of health. We do not ever remember to have seen him look better.' This gentleman so surprisingly met upon Snow Hill, from some peculiarity in gait or gesture, was a constant butt for mirth to the small paragraph-mongers of the day; and our friend thought that he might have his fling at him with the best. We met A. in Holborn, shortly after this extraordinary encounter, which he told with tears of satisfaction in his eyes, and chuckling at the anticipated effect of its announcement next day in the paper. We did not quite comprehend where the wit of it lay at the time; nor was it easy to be detected when the thing came out next morning advantaged by type and letterpress. He had better have met anything that morning than a Common Councilman. His services were shortly after dispensed with, on the plea that his paragraphs of late had been deficient in point."

This "Bob Allen," as Lamb calls him, who must

have been quite a character, afterwards "got on" the *True Briton*, the *Star*, and the *Traveller*, from all of which, Lamb adds, he was successively dismissed, without any other reason for his discharge being assigned than the stereotyped one, that there was no further occasion for his services. Poor "Bob Allen," while engaged in writing his witty paragraphs at sixpence apiece, had, Lamb assures us, one unfailing resource when cudgelling his brains in vain for something better. That was, to repeat a paragraph which owed its paternity to himself, and had done good service, at certain intervals, scores of times:—"It is not generally known that the three blue balls at the pawnbrokers' shops are the ancient arms of Lombardy. The Lombards were the first money-brokers in Europe." By the appearance of this paragraph in any particular paper, Charles Lamb gravely assures us, "Bob Allen's" friends knew at once that he had got employment on the particular paper which it adorned. But the thing was overdone. "Bob Allen" had repeated the paragraph once too often, and the final result was, that he found that in every place "there was no further occasion for his services." I myself knew a contributor to the papers, belonging to the penny-a-line class, who greatly improved on the idea of "Bob Allen." His ingenious device was to collect a sufficient number of brief paragraphs of a light kind to last for a year, and when his stock had become exhausted, he began the series again, and repeated them each day for the next twelve months;

and so on for a series of years. A very considerable number found insertion in several of the daily papers, and as he got three-halfpence for every line, he made a much better thing of it than Charles Lamb's "Bob Allen." But dishonest expedients are almost certain to be detected in the long run. That of this penny-a-liner was so, and his doom was essentially the same as that of "Bob Allen." He was first denounced as practising a system of dishonesty, and then received an unmistakeable intimation that there was no further occasion for his services.

Before parting from Charles Lamb, I should reproach myself were I not to bestow a farewell word in vindication of his character from the charge of having been addicted to the vice of drunkenness. I fear that the belief of his having been addicted to habits of inebriety is very general among even his warmest admirers as a literary man, and as a genial and generous friend. That he was fond of "a friendly glass" is evident, not only from the testimony of those who were most intimately acquainted with him in the private walks of life, but from various incidental phrases which occur in his "Essays of Elia" and others of his works; but I have met with no evidence which would justify the assertion made by many and extensively believed, that he was, in the worst acceptance of the term, a confirmed drunkard. The *Quarterly Review*, in reviewing some of his works many years ago, countenanced the idea of Lamb being a regular drunkard, and thousands gave credit to the

representation because it was made by so high a literary authority. But the writer's representation was not supported by evidence. The belief in Lamb's being a habitual drunkard had its origin in the fact of his having published in the *London Magazine* a paper under the head "Confessions of a Drunkard." It was at once concluded by the majority of those who read that article, that Lamb was himself the hero who figured in it, and that all the experiences which he described were his own. It is now generally known that this was a great misconception. The picture of the madness and the misery of the drunkard, whose character and conduct he there described, was not that of himself, but of myriads who had allowed themselves to become slaves to that dreadful and most detestable vice. Charles Lamb had his faults and failings, but he was not the habitual drunkard which the *Quarterly Review* asserted, and which many believed, and some still believe, him to have been.

But I return from two of its most distinguished contributors, to the *Morning Post* itself. Though for some time in its juvenile years it was more than ultra-Liberal in its political creed, it has for considerably more than half a century been Conservative in its principles. During, indeed, the Premiership of Lord Palmerston it might have been regarded as his organ; but then it is to be remembered that after all Lord Palmerston was not much of a Liberal. From frequent conversations which I have had in private with

Lord Palmerston, it was impossible I could doubt that he was Conservative in his heart, and that even the little Liberalism—for it never was much—that he professed was to be ascribed to expediency, not to any special affection for Liberalism as a creed. But by the *Morning Post's* adhesion to, and uniform support of, Lord Palmerston, it lost no inconsiderable amount of its circulation. This was to be expected, as it had for many years before been strenuous and consistent in the support of the Toryism of the day.

Until the year 1826 its size was not much larger than half the *Globe* of the present day. The expenses for reporting until then were comparatively trifling; but in that year the paper was considerably enlarged, and a corresponding increase took place in the reporting department, which it was sought to make as good, and it was so made, as the other morning papers; and the result was that it rose both in reputation and circulation. Its fashionable intelligence has for nearly half a century been a great feature in the *Post*. It was not only serviceable in the way of extending the circulation of the paper in aristocratic and fashionable circles, but during "the season" it brought in a large amount of money in the shape of payments for the paragraphs sent to its columns giving a list of the names of those that were present at dinner parties, evening parties, balls, réunions, or by whatever other name these gatherings of the West End society were brought together.



None of these notices—not even half a dozen lines—ever find their way into the columns of the *Post* at a less price than half a guinea, while the larger lists are often charged at the rate of from 5*l.* 5*s.* to 7*l.* 7*s.*; and every one who reads the *Post* must have been struck with the number of these fashionable receptions, with lists of all who were present, which grace the columns of that journal from after the Easter holidays until the end of July, when “the season” comes to a close. The course of the *Post* has of late years been, as a rule, somewhat independent or neutral in relation to the political questions of the day; but on some subjects it takes a decided course, and enunciates its views with great clearness, and advocates them with much vigour.

There is no more prominent feature in our existing morning journalism, than the space it devotes to dramatic and musical criticism. It is due therefore to the *Morning Post* to say, that it was the first of all the London papers to introduce the practice of giving systematic notices of the drama, the opera, and concerts.

I have not made any allusion to Mr. Algernon Borthwick, as having been for the last twenty years supreme in the managerial department of the *Morning Post*, because the fact is so universally known as not to need a specific reference.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### PRESENT METROPOLITAN DAILY PAPERS.

#### THE TIMES.—PART FIRST.

Its Origin—First Appearing under the Title of the *Daily Universal Register*—The Logographic System of Printing—Mr. Walter's Addresses to the Public—First Theatrical Notices given by the *Times*—No Leading Articles in its Early History—Character of its First Contents—Retirement from the Management by the first Mr. Walter—Accession of the second Mr. Walter—Government Persecution of the *Times*.

I now come to the *Times*,—the greatest journal the world has ever witnessed, and which would be well worthy of a volume to itself, did the plan of this work admit of my devoting that amount of space to it. The *Times* was not the original title. It was started in the beginning of 1785 under the name of the *Daily Universal Register*, and did not adopt the title of the *Times* until the 1st of January, 1788. Mr. John Walter, grandfather of Mr. John Walter, the principal present proprietor of the *Times*, was the originator and sole proprietor of the *Daily Universal Register*. To the reason which he gave for changing that title to the title of the *Times* I will presently advert. The predecessor of the *Times*, as well as the

*Times* itself for some years, was printed by a process called the Logographic system, which at the time excited considerable interest in typographical foundries and in composing-rooms. It was partly the invention of a Mr. Henry Johnson, and partly of Mr. Walter himself, both of whom were so sanguine that it would constitute a new era in printing, that two letters patent were obtained to secure the right to themselves to use that mode of printing. One of these letters patent was dated November 9th, 1788, and the other October 16th, 1790. Its great feature consisted in having cast in one piece of metal such words, or terminations of words, as were in most frequent use, instead of the universal practice, at that time as now, for the compositor to pick out every individual letter to form whatever words he may have had to set up. Knight Hunt says, in his "Fourth Estate," that in order to print in accordance with this new mode, it was found necessary to send an order, on a particular occasion, to a type foundry in these words:—"Send me a hundredweight, made up in separate pounds, of 'heat,' 'cold,' 'wet,' 'dry,' 'murder,' 'fire,' 'dreadful robbery,' 'atrocious outrage,' 'fearful calamity,' and 'alarming explosion.' So great an aggression on the existing mode of printing newspapers or books, excited, as might be expected, great hostility, both on the part of master printers and of compositors in their establishments. Still, in the face of all the opposition which Mr. Walter had to encounter, he

resolutely persevered in practically carrying out his ideas in relation to logographic printing. When the publication of the *Daily Universal Register* had reached its 510th number, and had thus been printed logographically more than a year and a half, he issued an address to the readers, in which he complains in energetic terms of the opposition, mingled with enmity, with which he had to do battle. "My enemies," he says, "have not only openly attacked my plan, but have insidiously attempted to undermine it; but it being founded on a firm basis, I have stood the test unshaken, while my assailants have been defeated with an exposition of their ignorance, malevolence, and envy." Mr. Walter concludes his address to the public in the following language:—

"Embarked in a business, into which I entered a mere novice, consisting of several departments, want of experience laid me open to many and gross impositions, and I have been severely injured by the inattention, neglect, and ignorance of others. These reasons, though they will not excuse, will palliate and account for the errors which have appeared in several of the books published at the first working of the logographic press; for, in fact, these errors were not owing to any defect in the art of printing logographically, but to the readers and editors, whose duty it was to correct the press sheets. Complaints, however, will now subside, the cause having been removed, and every branch of the business being at present superintended by men on whose skill, industry,

and integrity I can implicitly rely. I shall lay my plan before the public in the *Universal Register* of to-morrow."

In a second address to the public, which Mr. Walter published in his paper the day after the one to which I have just referred, he adverts to "the impediments and difficulties which he had to encounter in the management and regulation of the system." One of his greatest difficulties is thus explained by himself:—"The whole English language," says Mr. Walter, "lay before me in a confused arrangement. It consisted of about 90,000 words. This multitudinous mass I reduced to about 5000, by separating the parcels and removing the obsolete words, technical terms, and common terminations."

Having proceeded in his experiments thus far, Mr. Walter thought he was in a position to put his new system to a practical test by printing "The English Dictionary;" but the experiment was comparatively a failure. "After," he says, "severe labour, unremitting attention, and a heavy expense for the compositors, whom I was obliged to pay by the week, instead of by the quantity printed, I discovered many serious objections to this essay, particularly that a great number of the words distributed through the founts were useless, being seldom called for in printing; that by the rejection of them the founts might be lessened, and the cells for the types increased in space, the narrowness of which was found extremely inconvenient."

Mr. Walter then proceeds to explain the manner in which he succeeded, to a certain extent, in obviating these defective parts of his new system. In a third and last letter on the subject, which followed in succession, the next day, his other two letters, he recurs to the opposition which his great experiment had had to encounter, admits that its success was not complete, but expresses his full confidence in his almost immediate triumph over all the personal hostility he had had to confront, and all the difficulties of a mechanical kind which lay in his path to success.

“I have,” says Mr. Walter, towards the conclusion of his third address to the public, “I have nearly brought to perfection an undertaking which has long been an object of contemplation among the greatest men and the most eminent modern philosophers. Whatever I have already suffered in the execution of a plan so liberal and useful, my country must ultimately reap honour and profit, as it lies open to the inspection of all mankind, and on the expiration of my patent will become common property. I still, however, confide in the generosity of my country, and trust that a native, who has dedicated the fragments of a fortune wrecked in the service of his fellow subjects, and his time and labour in the pursuit of an art salutary to the public at large, will not suffer the crash of disappointment in the very moment he arrives at the goal where he has long expected reward to crown his toil.”



These three addresses to the public by the first Mr. Walter were, it will be remembered, published, not in the *Times*, which had not yet been commenced, nor any intimation given that a journal was destined soon to appear under that title. They appeared in the *Universal Register*, which preceded the *Times*, and after Mr. Walter had had about twenty months' experience of the logographic system of printing. In that system he persisted, not only till the publication of the *Times*, but for some years after its commencement. But after the immense labour he had bestowed, and the enormous expense he had incurred in his efforts to bring it to a state of practicable and profitable working, he was obliged to abandon it, and have recourse again to the ordinary mode of printing. It is a wonder that Mr. Walter did not, with his great intelligence and practical knowledge of printing, sooner see the impracticability of the logographic system, from the fact that single letters must of necessity be mixed up, in the composition, with entire words, and terminations of words, and that the two kinds of composition must often be attended with great inconvenience. Besides, as Mr. Timperley, who was a practical printer, says, in his voluminous "History of Printing in the Eighteenth Century," the quantity of words required to carry out the system must necessarily have proved fatal to its success. "According," says Mr. Timperley, "to this improvement, an order for a hundredweight of English *nouns*, half a hundredweight of *adjectives*, and

a quarter of a hundredweight of *verbs*, would be too vague to answer any purpose ; for an assortment suitable for a volume of sermons would not print a volume of philosophical transactions, or a system of geography. He must either be furnished with five or ten hundredweight of the *whole* English language, or a hundredweight made up in pounds consisting of such words as these." Here follows a long list of words, making, as Mr. Timperley remarks, "a most laborious and comical list." Various other efforts, let me add, have, within the last thirty years, been made to introduce new systems of printing, all confidently asserted by their several inventors to be far superior to the present system, which has existed, in its leading features, since the discovery of printing ; but they have, one and all, been found to be unsuccessful,—all of them, indeed, even more so than the logographic system, to which I have thus, at some length, adverted.

The first Mr. Walter—I mean the first in connexion with the *Times*—was, in many respects, a remarkable man. When he was satisfied, after due consideration, that any view which he had adopted was based on solid grounds, nothing in the world—no amount of opposition, however great—could divert him from his purpose. He was a fearless assertor, at all times, and under all circumstances, of whatever principles he held. And this boldness, blended with integrity, frequently subjected him to costly consequences,—costly in a double sense ; for during the

Georgian period of Press prosecutions, Mr. Walter again and again suffered severely, both in purse and person.

He was indeed, in that sense of the word, a hero of no ordinary kind, and would, if fully assured, have submitted, had it been necessary, to martyrdom for his beliefs. Though his logographic system of printing was ultimately found to be a failure, there was something in Mr. Walter's conduct which no one could fail to admire in standing up so heroically for it, amidst the opposition and derision of those who were hostile to it, so long as he had faith in it. But apart from all other considerations, the simple fact that the first Mr. John Walter was the father and founder of the *Times*, now so prodigious a power in the country and the world, ought to be sufficient to ensure the most profound reverence for his memory.

On the 1st January, 1788, the first number of the *Times* appeared; but this was only a change of title. The same journal had been established, as before mentioned, three years before this, as the *Universal Register*. The following are the reasons assigned by Mr. Walter in the first number of the *Times* for the change of the title, with an announcement of certain contemplated improvements. It is a curious and interesting article, and will be read with interest:—

The *Universal Register* has been a name as injurious to the logographic newspaper as Tristram was to Mr. Shandy's son; but old Shandy forgot he might have rectified by confirmation the mistake of the parson at baptism, and with

the touch of a Bishop changed Tristram into Trimegistus.

The *Universal Register*, from the day of its first appearance to the day of its confirmation, had, like Tristram, suffered from innumerable casualties, both laughable and serious, arising from its name, which in its introduction was immediately curtailed of its fair proportions by all who called for it, the word *Universal* being universally omitted, and the word *Register* being only retained. "Boy, bring me the *Register*." The waiter answers, "Sir, we have no library, but you may see it in the New Exchange Coffee-House." "Then I will see it there," answers the disappointed politician; and he goes to the New Exchange Coffee-House and calls for the *Register*, upon which the waiter tells him he cannot have it as he is not a subscriber; or presents him with the "Court and City Register," the "Old Annual Register," or the "New Annual Register;" or if the Coffee-house be within the purlieus of Covent Garden, or the hundreds of Drury, slips into the politician's hand "Harris's Register of Ladies!"

For these and other reasons, the printer of the *Universal Register* has added to its original name that of the *Times*, which being a monosyllable, bids defiance to the corruptions and mutilations of the language.

The *Times*! What a monstrous name. Granted—for the *Times* is a many-headed monster that speaks with an hundred tongues, and displays a thousand characters, and in the course of its transitions in life, assumes innumerable shapes and humours.

The critical reader will observe we personify our new name; but as we give it no distinction of sex, and though it will be active in its vocation, yet we apply to it the neuter gender.

The *Times* being formed of and possessing qualities of opposite and heterogeneous natures, cannot be classed either in the animal or vegetable genus, but like the Polypus is doubtful, and in the discussion, description, and illustration,

will employ the pens of the most celebrated amongst the literati.

The heads of the *Times*, as already has been said, are many; these will, however, not always appear at the same time, but casually, as public or private affairs may call them forth.

The principal or leading heads are:—The Literary, Political, Commercial, Philosophical, Critical, Theatrical, Fashionable, Humorous, Witty, etc. etc., each of which are supplied with a competent share of intellect for the pursuit of their several functions; an endowment which is not in all cases to be found, even in the heads of the State, the heads of the Church, the heads of the Law, the heads of the Navy, the heads of the Army, and, though last not least, the great heads of the Universities.

The political head of the *Times*, like that of Janus the Roman deity, is double-faced; with one countenance it will smile continually on the friends of Old England, and with the other will frown incessantly on her enemies.

The alteration we have made in our paper is not without precedents. The *World* has parted with half its *caput mortuum* and a moiety of its brains; the *Herald* has cut off one-half of its head, and has lost its original humour. The *Post*, it is true, retains its whole head and its old features; and as to the other public prints, they appear as having neither heads nor tails.

On the Parliamentary head every communication that ability and industry can produce may be expected. To this great national object, the *Times* will be most sedulously attentive, most accurately correct, and strictly impartial in its reports.

The following was at this time the imprint appended to the end of the *Times*:—

London: Printed for J. Walter, at the Logographic Press, Printing House Square, near Apothecaries' Hall,

Blackfriars; where Advertisements, Essays, Letters, and Articles of Intelligence will be taken in. Also at Mr. Meltenius's, Confectioner, Charing Cross; Mr. Whiteaves's, Watchmaker, No. 39, opposite St. Dunstan's Church, Fleet Street; Mr. Axtell's, No. 1, Finch Lane, Cornhill; at Mr. Bushby's, No. 1, Catherine Street, Strand; Mr. Mose's, Silk Dyer, Spring Gardens; and Mr. Fuse's, Stationer, No. 103, corner of Fountain Court, Strand.

At the period when the *Times* started, nor for a long time afterwards, I can meet with nothing in its columns in the shape of "Reviews of Books,"—now one of the leading features in the newspaper press. But the *Times* was not singular in not devoting any portion of its space to notices of new publications. The absence of anything of that kind seemed to be characteristic of all the journals at that time, and for years afterwards. But the *Times* was not inattentive to the drama. In its very first number there is a notice of the previous night's performances both at Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres. As the reader may be curious to see what sort of theatrical criticism appeared in the *Times* on the day of its birth, which took place eighty-three years ago, I will transfer these two notices, adhering to their typography, to my pages. First we have the notice of Drury Lane Theatre:—

#### THEATRE—DRURY LANE.

Hamlet—whose doom, at least this season, has unfortunately been, "to walk the night, and strut to empty benches"—performed yesterday evening its accustomed *penance* in lieu of Tamerlane.



Were not this excellent tragedy so often used “on the spur of the occasion”—we think such admirable acting as Kemble’s Prince of Denmark would meet with more *attendance*,—more applause it could not have.

Mrs. Ward’s performance of the *Queen* is the best proof of Mrs. Siddons’ assertion, that “Gertrude had more good points about her than the critics were aware of,”—Mrs. Ward’s distracted *look*, in the closet scene, aided most powerfully by Kemble’s piteous exclamation, “On him! on him!”—Indeed, the whole delineation of that difficult character, did much credit to this rising actress.

Such was the theatrical criticism on the performances at Drury Lane on the last night of 1787, and which appeared in the first number of the *Times* published on the following day, being the first day of the new year 1788. The notice of the acting at Covent Garden Theatre on the same night, and which also appeared in the first number of the *Times*, was the following:—

#### COVENT GARDEN.

“Henry the Fourth,” with Ryder’s Falstaff, ended the year merrily at this Theatre. The house was remarkably full, and the lower boxes had most of the fashionable *amateurs* in town.

The Falstaff of Ryder, though not perfection, is yet respectable; and it is the more welcome, “with all its imperfections on its head,” as disappointing the general assertion, that Falstaff *died* with *Henderson*. Among the most pleasing and prominent features were—his address to the *gang* on Gad’s Hill—“By the Lord, I *knew* you,” to the Prince, and soliloquy on *honour*. The description of his *company* was also replete with humour.

Edwin’s kind donation of the *sugar caudy* was particularly welcome to Lewis, who was most villainously *hoarse*,—the

scene of "Anon! anon, Sir!" of course lost much of its effect.

What a contrast there is to the character of this theatrical criticism in the first number of the *Times*, in that which we find in that journal in the present day!

One can hardly look upon the first number of the *Times*, in 1788, and believe, as he looks on and handles a copy of that journal in the year 1871, that it not only is the same paper, but the property of the grandson of the gentleman who commenced it. One cannot help wondering what would be the feelings of the first Mr. Walter, who originated the *Times*, were it within the pale of possibility that he could revisit Printing House Square, and not only witness the appearance and character of the *Times*, but see the machinery by which it is printed, and the appearance generally of the place from which the first number was issued. He could scarcely credit the evidence of his own eyes. He could hardly believe that either the premises or the paper were the same. With regard to the latter he would be especially amazed, and even astounded, at the change which has taken place. The *Times* had not a single line in the shape of a leading article when it first appeared, nor had it for many years afterwards. That was a characteristic, indeed, of all our morning papers, which had no prominence till we were advanced in the present century. I have before mentioned this fact in relation to the *Morning Chronicle*, and it is right I should state that it was true in a greater or less measure, in relation to all the newspapers. Even

for a considerable time after several of them began to follow the inside heading of the papers with something which, from its large leaded type, had the appearance of a leading article, it only consisted of a sort of summary of one or more of the more important and interesting of our foreign or domestic events,—often, indeed, of the two classes of occurrences,—just as we see summaries of what takes place at home and abroad in some of the morning journals of the present day. As for full discussions of the great political or other questions of the hour, there was nothing of the kind, until, as I have said, we had even advanced far in the present century. The size of the papers of this period would not, indeed, have admitted of the same ample discussion of great public questions, in the form of those leading articles which adorn the columns of the morning journals that the present generation has been accustomed to read and admire. Indeed, the inside four columns of each of the two folio pages out of the four of which the *Times* then consisted, would not have more than absorbed the leading article matter which it every morning provides for its readers in the present day. In some subsequent parts of my work I shall have occasion to contrast, in various respects, the *Times* of 1788 with the *Times* of 1871.

But though the *Times* had no leaders at first, nor for many years afterwards, it contained, considering its limited size, a goodly amount of news. Its intelligence, too, was well selected. In these respects it

seemed to me to be superior to the *Public Advertiser*, the *Morning Post*, the *Morning Herald*, or the *Morning Chronicle*, all of which were several years its senior,—and the latter two, somewhat larger in size, and consequently had these advantages over it. The *Times* made it, for a long time, a feature to give small paragraphs in a lively form, relative to events in high life, which must have often verged on the law of libel. There is one in the very first number, relative to the then Lady Bristol, at that time better known as the Duchess of Kingston, which neither the *Times* nor any other journal of the present day would deem it prudent to give,—were some other aristocratic lady as equivocal in her conduct as was the duchess in question. An allusion, too, is made in the same first number of the *Times*, to the return to London of Lord George Gordon, whose name was then, as it is now, notorious in connexion with the George's Fields' riots,—which might have been considered going too far. Yet we do not hear of any proceedings being taken against the *Times* in consequence of the publication of these lively and incisive paragraphs.

Medical quackery seems ever to have been both an audacious and profitable business. The *Times* set its face against it in its very first number. Here is the paragraph to which I allude. It will be observed that the ignorance of the empiric is shown in every word he utters, by the character of his pronunciation:—“O, Quackery! where wilt thou end? O, Physic, where are thy disgraces to terminate? There is at

this time, a practitioner in town who says to his patients, 'Use my *vegetable*, to low my *regiment* [regimen], and never fear it will *eraicate* all your *pectril* complaints.' Such a character should not escape the animadversion of the *Times*; but of 'this here Doctor,' more anon, when the *Times* has leisure."

It is worthy of being mentioned, that while all the other morning papers published contemporaneously with the *Times* in its earlier history, had affixed to them the halfpenny stamp of that period,—at least all that I have seen in the British Museum,—the only numbers I have seen in the infancy of the *Times* furnish no proof that it had met, in that respect, the requirements of the Exchequer. It is quite possible that through some accident or other, the trustees of the British Museum may not, in the first instance, have received copies of the *Times* in its earlier years, and that afterwards, when they wished to have that journal, they could only procure unstamped copies, which all proprietors of newspapers were permitted to retain in their own possession,—as they were so long as any stamp duty existed,—only, that, in the event of a single unstamped copy getting into circulation the proprietors of the journal from whose office it emanated were liable to a heavy penalty.

We have no means of ascertaining the relative circulation of the several morning papers which were in existence when the *Times* was commenced; but we have the evidence of our own eyes as to the comparative number of advertisements which appeared in their

columns. The reputation and circulation of the *Public Advertiser*, which was always called "Junius's Paper," had, by this time considerably declined, and the *Morning Chronicle* had to a certain extent taken the place of the *Public Advertiser*; but the *Times*, in the first year of its existence, had, on an average, nearly three times as many advertisements as the *Public Advertiser* or the *Morning Chronicle*. The number of advertisements in the first impression of the *Times* was fifty-seven, and they seemed to be of a better paying class than the generality of those which were to be found in its morning contemporaries of the same day,—so that, between the greater number of advertisements, and the better price obtained for them, the *Times* derived a much greater amount of revenue from that source than any other of the morning papers which were contemporary with it. But the *Times* had another advantage over contemporary journals. They only charged two pence halfpenny for their papers while the price of the *Times* was three pence. Whenever, therefore, a paper published in those days had anything like a circulation, very considerable profits must have been derived from that source. Then, as I have before shown, not only was what printers call the composition chiefly of large type, and the quantity limited, but the paper being both very small in size and coarse in quality, the profits altogether of the *Times* must have been more than remunerative. And this will be further evident when it is remembered that there were not only no leading articles at this



time, but no original writing of any kind deserving the name, and consequently no expenses worth mentioning. With, therefore, the limited quantity and bad quality of the paper, the almost entire absence of editorial expenses, the smallness of the printer's bill, and I ought to add, no foreign correspondence, nor, indeed, anything that could be called correspondence at home,—the *Times* must, I repeat, have proved at the outset of its career, a profitable enterprise.

As the infirmities of advancing years began to be sensibly felt by Mr. Walter, the originator of the *Times*, and under whose sole management it had up to this period been,—he determined soon after the commencement of the present century, to make arrangements for transferring the chief part of the property, and the entire management of the paper to his son, Mr. John Walter.

Mr. John Walter, junior, accordingly succeeded his father as sole manager of the *Times* in 1803. He was no less endowed with the great qualities of firm adhesion to principles, and fearless assertion of them, than his father. He was a man equally persevering in his prosecution of any purpose on which he had fixed his mind. Nor had he a smaller share—perhaps I should say he had a larger—than his father of that business knowledge, capacity, and sagacity which are indispensable to success in any such undertaking as that of conducting a great morning journal. What the course of conduct was which Mr. Walter, junior, resolved to adopt, and did adopt, when he be-

came part-proprietor and sole manager of the *Times*, in the year 1803, as before mentioned, is described by himself, seven years after that journal had been exclusively under his editorial control. In the *Times*, under the date, February 11, 1810, we find the following address from Mr. Walter to his readers. It reveals to us as flagrant a case of persecution on the part of the Government of the day, of a public journal, solely because of the upright, the independent, and the fearless course which it adopted, as is to be met with in the annals of the newspaper press. The document possesses so much of historic interest, that I feel called on to give it at length :—

The part-proprietor and exclusive manager of this paper (says Mr. Walter), became so in the beginning of the year 1803, and from that date it is that he undertakes to justify the independent spirit with which it has been conducted. On his commencing the business, he gave his conscientious and disinterested support to the existing Administration—that of Lord Sidmouth. The paper continued that support of the men in power, but without suffering them to repay its partiality by contributions calculated to produce any reduction whatsoever in the expense of managing the concern; because, by such admission, the editor was conscious he should have sacrificed the right of condemning any act which he might esteem detrimental to the public welfare. That Administration, therefore, had, as he before stated, his disinterested support, because he believed it then, as he believes it now, to have been a virtuous and upright Administration; but not knowing how long it might continue so, he did not choose to surrender his right of free judgment by accepting of obligations, though offered in the most unexceptionable manner.

This Ministry was dissolved in the spring of 1804, when the places of Lord Sidmouth, Lord St. Vincent, &c. were supplied by Mr. Pitt, Lord Melville, &c. It was not long before the Catamaran Expedition was undertaken by Lord Melville; and again at a subsequent period, his lordship's practices in the Navy Department were brought to light by the Tenth Report of the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry. The editor's father held at that time, and had held for eighteen years before, the situation of printer to the Customs. The editor knew the disposition of the man whose conduct he found himself obliged to condemn, yet he never refrained a moment, on that account, from speaking of the Catamaran Expedition as it merited, or from bestowing on the practices disclosed in the Tenth Report the terms of reprobation with which they were greeted by the general sense of the country. The result was as he had apprehended. Without the allegation of a single complaint, his family was deprived of the business, which had been so long discharged by it, of printing for the Customs—a business which was performed by contract, and which he will venture to say, was executed with an economy and a precision that have not since been exceeded. The Government advertisements were at the same time withdrawn.

Could anything be imagined more unworthy a Government, more discreditable to noblemen and gentlemen of high social position, than this persecution of the proprietor of a public journal, merely because, as a man of integrity and independence, he acted in accordance with his convictions of what was alike due to his own character and to the best interests of the country? Mr. Walter continues:—

On the death of Mr. Pitt, in January, 1806, an Administration was formed, containing a portion of that preceding

Ministry which the editor had so disinterestedly supported on his undertaking the management of the paper. It was by one of these that he was directed to state the injustice that had been sustained in the loss of the Custom House business. Various plans were proposed for the recovery of it: at last, in the following July, a copy of a memorial to be presented to the Treasury, was submitted to the editor for his signature; but believing, for certain reasons, that this bare reparation of an injury was likely to be considered as a favour entitling those who granted it to a certain degree of influence over the politics of the journal, the editor refused to sign, or to have any concern in presenting the memorial. But he did more than even this, for, finding that a memorial was still likely to be presented, he wrote to those from whom the restoration of the employment was to spring, disavowing on his part (with whom the sole conducting of the paper remained) all share in the application, which he conceived was meant to fetter the freedom of that paper. The printing business of the Customs has, as may perhaps be anticipated, never been restored.

But Mr. Walter has still some further revelations to make respecting the relentless persecution which in this way he received at the hands of the Sidmouth Administration:—

The Editor (speaking as he does all through in that capacity) will now speak of the oppression which he has sustained while pursuing this independent line of conduct. Since the War of 1805, between Austria and France, his arrangements to obtain foreign intelligence were of a magnitude to create no ordinary anxiety in his mind respecting their result; yet from the period of the Sidmouth Administration, Government from time to time employed every means in its power to counteract his designs, and he is indebted for his success only to professional exertion, and the private friendship of persons unconnected with politics.

First, in relation to the War of 1805, the editor's packages from abroad were always stopped by Government at the outposts, while those for the Ministerial journals were allowed to pass. The foreign captains were always asked by a Government officer at Gravesend, if they had papers for the *Times*. These, when acknowledged, were as regularly stopped. The Gravesend officer, on being spoken to on the subject, replied, that he would transmit to the editor his papers with the same punctuality as he did those belonging to the publishers of the journals just alluded to, but that he was not allowed. This led to a complaint at the Home Secretary's Office, where the editor, after repeated delays, was informed by the Under Secretary that the matter did not rest with him, but that it was then in discussion, whether Government should throw the whole open; or reserve an exclusive channel for the favoured journals; yet was the editor informed that he might receive his foreign papers as a favour from Government. This, of course, implying the expectation of a corresponding favour from him in the spirit and tone of his publication, was firmly rejected, and he, in consequence, suffered for a time (by the loss or delay of important packets) for this resolution to maintain, at all hazards, his independence.

The same practices were resorted to at a subsequent period. They produced the same complaints on the part of the editor, and a redress was then offered to his grievance, provided it could be known what party in politics he meant to support. This, too, was again declined, as pledging the independence of his paper. And, be it observed, respecting the whole period during which the present conductor has now spoken, that it was from no determinate spirit of opposition to Government that he rejected the proposals made to him. On the contrary, he has on several, and those very important occasions, afforded those men his best support whose efforts nevertheless, at any time, to purchase, or whose attempts to compel that support he has deemed himself obliged to reject and resist. Nay, he can with great

truth add, that advantages in the most desirable forms have been offered him, and that he has refused them.

Having thus established his independence during the several Administrations whose measures it has been his office to record, he will not omit the occasion which offers to declare that he equally disclaims all and any individual influence; and that, when he offers individual praise, it is from a sense of its being particularly due to the character which calls it forth.

We wonder what would be thought of a Government of the present day, that could act towards the proprietor of any existing paper as the Sidmouth Administration did towards the late Mr. Walter. It would be loaded with an amount of public opprobrium, beneath which it could scarcely survive a week.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### PRESENT METROPOLITAN DAILY PAPERS.

#### THE TIMES.—PART SECOND.

Mr. Walter the Second—Dr. Stoddart—Mr. Thomas Barnes—  
The *New Times*—Mr. Walter's Liberality to the Writers in the  
*Times*—Instances given—Introduction of Steam Printing.

I HAVE been chiefly referring in my later pages to the history of the *Times* in the years which intervened between 1800 and 1810. The first Mr. Walter died in 1812, having, as before stated, left in his will the management of the *Times* to his son, Mr. John Walter. I ought not to omit to mention here that no sooner had Mr. John Walter, jun., succeeded to its sole management, than he began to display that sagacity, that energy, and that liberal mode of conducting the paper which, in due time—long before his death—raised it to an eminence, and invested it with a power unparalleled in the records of newspaper journalism. Among the many men of talents whose services he retained as contributors—some stated, others occasional—there was one whom he engaged as editor who possessed abilities of a very superior kind. I

refer to Dr. Stoddart, afterwards Sir John Stoddart, Governor of Malta, and who, because so ultra a Tory, was held up to public ridicule by Thomas Moore under the nickname of Dr. Slop. That nickname stuck to him as long as he lived. I cannot give the precise time at which Dr. Stoddart received the appointment of editor of the *Times*, but I believe his instalment in the editorial chair took place two or three years after 1810. Be that as it may, Dr. Stoddart displayed great ability in his editorship of the *Times*. His chief, if not his only fault in his journalistic conduct, was the extreme violence of his attacks on the Emperor Napoleon. In this respect there was a rabidness in his writings against which Mr. Walter again and again remonstrated with him. No epithets could be too coarse for Dr. Stoddart wherewith to load Napoleon Buonaparte. "The Corsican scoundrel" was among the mildest of these epithets. But Mr. Walter's remonstrances against the employment of such language as this were without effect. Dr. Stoddart obstinately persisted in the course which he had chalked out for himself. Instead, indeed, of moderating the tone and terms in which he spoke of the First Emperor of France, he grew increasingly violent; and the result was that Mr. Walter found it in the end expedient to dispense with his services. But before this step was resorted to on the part of Mr. Walter—who, I ought to mention, though not at the time the exclusive proprietor of the paper, was by far its largest, and

had the sole control of its management—Napoleon winced so much under the attacks of the *Times*, that he brought the question before some of the most eminent counsel then at the English bar, whether he could not obtain a verdict, if he brought actions against that journal for attacks upon him, which he pronounced libels of the grossest and most groundless description. The removal of Dr. Stoddart from the editorship of the *Times*, in consequence of the extreme violence of his attacks on Napoleon, and his disregard of the remonstrances of Mr. Walter against the course he was pursuing, took place either towards the end of 1815, or early in 1816. Soon after his dismissal, he started a journal in opposition to the *Times*, under the title of the *New Times*. In the latter journal he displayed the same great ability which he had done during the years he had been editor of the *Times*. But the paper did not succeed; commercially it was a signal failure in the end. Though it seemed for a season to promise well, eventually it was found, from the magnitude of the pecuniary losses which its proprietors sustained, necessary to discontinue its publication, after an existence of ten or eleven years. Another morning paper, however, under the editorship of Mr. Alexander, previously editor of the *Liverpool Standard*, arose, phœnix-like, from its ashes under the title of the *Morning Journal*; but it was even more short-lived than the *New Times*, having expired in 1830, after a sickly and sorrowful existence of less than three years.

Mr. Thomas Barnes, for several years a reporter on

the *Times*, and who had some five or six years previously brought himself into notice as a man of very superior abilities, by articles in that journal and the publication of a volume of graphic sketches of the most prominent public characters of the day, which appeared in the *Examiner*,—succeeded Dr. Stoddart in the editorship of the *Times*. The latter did much to raise the character of the paper. It was at this time, if my memory be not at fault, that the *Times* not only claimed to itself the right to be considered “the leading journal of Europe,” but was universally admitted to have a claim to that high and honourable distinction. For many years Mr. Barnes wrote very copiously for the leading article department of the *Times*; but for the last few years of his editorship, and, indeed, I may say of his life, he laboured under an illness which greatly interfered with the discharge of his journalistic duties. That illness, after his undergoing a painful surgical operation, ended in his death, at the comparatively early age of fifty-six. Mr. Barnes displayed great tact in the editorial management of the *Times*, as well as much power in the leading articles he wrote for it. He was always looking out with great vigilance, in the periodicals and other journals of the day, for any evidences which might be furnished of unknown writers possessing that sort of fitness for contributing to the *Times* which he thought would render them an acquisition to either its salaried staff of writers, or its occasional but frequent contributors. An instance of this oc-

curred within my own personal knowledge. A splendid article on the late Mr. Milman's well-known work, "The History of the Jews," appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* about a quarter of a century ago. Mr. Barnes was so struck with the critical discrimination and power of diction which the paper displayed, that he immediately asked a gentleman who, at the time, held an influential position on the *Times*, and to whom I am indebted for my information, to see Mr. Fraser—who was, in a sense, the editor of his own magazine—and ascertain from him the name of the writer. Mr. Fraser at once furnished the friend of Mr. Barnes with the name of the contributor of the particular paper, and he forthwith called on the writer, and asked him to contribute some articles for the *Times*, stating the terms which he would receive for them. Without my naming the terms, suffice it to say that they were in accordance with the traditional liberality with which that journal pays its contributors. The writer alluded to said that he had written the article in question for *Fraser's Magazine* without intending to receive any pay for it, out of pure friendship for Mr. Fraser, with whom he was on terms of the greatest intimacy. He added, that as any articles he might write for the *Times* would be on subjects congenial to his taste, or on questions in which he felt a special interest, he would make no charge whatever for them. The friend of Mr. Barnes, and the representative, on this occasion, of the *Times*, answered that the *Times* never accepted

any articles, or communications of any kind, on those terms; but that the proprietors insisted on giving remuneration according to the views of the editor as to what the amount ought to be. The gentleman whose services were thus sought to be retained for the *Times*, acceded to the wishes so expressed. I will not specify the amount of the remuneration which he received for his articles. It will be sufficient to say that it was five times the sum for such articles which most of the other papers were paying at that time; and, let me add, *more* than double what the most liberal of the morning papers are paying to the most approved contributors to their leading columns at the present time.

But the instance of liberal remuneration for literary labour which I am about to record, made by the late Mr. Walter for work done for the *Times*, has probably no parallel in newspaper history. A generation has hardly passed away since it became the late Alderman Harmer's conventional right, according to the rules and regulations of civic rotation, to become the Lord Mayor of the City of London. There was a general feeling in the public mind that, in consequence of his being the avowed proprietor of the *Weekly Dispatch*,—which at that time, through the writing of the late Mr. Williams, under the signature of "Publicola," was not only habitually infidel, but often blasphemous,—he was an unfit person to be selected for the Chief Magistrate of the first city in the world. The Court of Aldermen were exceedingly pained and em-



barrassed at the circumstance of their having to become the medium through which the choice of such a Lord Mayor could alone take place. On the other hand, unless a strong and general expression of public opinion in opposition to their nomination of Alderman Harmer to fill the civic chair, were made, they did not see how they could depart from the rotation which had been for centuries observed, except in extreme exceptional cases. Just at this period of perplexity between Corporation rules and moral duties, and when they were within a fortnight of the day when an election of a Lord Mayor must take place, an article,—the first leading article,—appeared in the *Times*, pointing out, in the strongest terms, that if Alderman Harmer, being the proprietor of the *Dispatch*, should be chosen Lord Mayor of London, it would bring the deepest discredit, alike on the Court of Aldermen who elected him to the office, and to the first city in the world, for having such a man for its Chief Magistrate. This communication to the *Times*, I ought to mention, was not written with a view to receive remuneration for it. That never for a moment entered the writer's mind. Indeed, the very fact that it was sent in the form of a letter—which unless in very rare cases, when there is an understanding between an editor and his contributor on the point, is never paid for—showed that it was not written with a view to money. It was written purely from principle. But though the communication was sent to the *Times* in the form of a letter, Mr. Walter was so struck with

the justice of its sentiments, and the power with which they were expressed, in conjunction with the extreme opportuneness of the communication,—that he transformed it into a leading article. To make this change in the form of the communication was no difficult task. It was only necessary to change the modest singular pronoun “I,” to the royal plural pronoun “we,” and the thing was done. Forth, accordingly, came the communication in question on the following day in all the dignity of a leading article; and to clothe it with still greater honour and power, it was made the first of the leading articles in that day’s impression of the leading journal of Europe. There still intervened eleven days between the one on which the article in question appeared in the *Times*, and that on which the Court of Aldermen would have to decide whether they would accept or reject Alderman Harmer as Lord Mayor. The writer in the *Times* felt, on religious and other grounds, so deep an interest in the issue, that he wrote a leading article in it every day in the interval. The power of that journal on the public mind was never more manifestly proved than on that occasion. Not only was a feeling of the deepest indignation and deprecation at the very idea of Mr. Harmer being chosen Lord Mayor, experienced in London, but it was hardly less so throughout the country. It became at last so strong that, even had the Court of Aldermen been disposed to appoint Mr. Harmer to the civic chair—which, however, they were not—they would not have dared to

take that step. Alderman Harmer was accordingly rejected, and everywhere expressions of gratitude were heard to the *Times* for what it had done, mingled with admiration and homage of the prodigious power of which it had thus shown itself to be possessed. Adopting the stereotyped royal phraseology in the leading article columns of our public journals, the *Times* might, on this occasion, justly exclaim, in tones of triumph, "Alone *we* did it!" But what of the writer of these articles, twelve in number? The writer was amply satisfied with the great moral and social victory which they had won through the medium of the *Times*. The idea of monetary remuneration never once entered his thoughts. Imagine, then, his surprise, when in a few days afterwards he received a cheque from Mr. Walter, with a handsome letter expressing his admiration of the ability of the articles, and his sense, in common with the public, of the service which they had done, not to the City of London only, but to society generally. But what was the amount of the cheque which accompanied the letter? Before I answer the question, let the reader pause for a moment, and in his own mind form an opinion on the subject. The sum for which the cheque was given for these twelve leading articles, averaging a column in length, was—will it be believed?—200*l.*! That is to say, 20*l.* for each article of the average length of a column! Such princely pay for literary labour was never, I confidently affirm,

before given in the newspaper history of this or any other land.

But this is only one of numerous instances consisting with my own personal knowledge, of the munificent remuneration which the *Times* gives to its contributors for what in newspaper phraseology are called "crack articles." Some years ago an instance was specially brought under my notice of an occasional contributor, since, I am sorry to say, dead, receiving a cheque for 30*l.* for the review of a book, which review only occupied three columns. The writer was so proud, as he well might be, of this Imperial pay for his one contribution, only three columns in length, that he kept the cheque in his pocket for some time, in order that he might exultingly show it to his friends. The salaried literary labourers on the *Times* establishment are paid on a scale of corresponding liberality, considering the permanency of their engagements. Nor does the liberality of the proprietors of the *Times* end even here. When any of their staff who have been any length of time with them, or have in any way distinguished themselves in the service of the paper, become unfitted for further labour, either by reason of illness, or other causes for which they themselves are not responsible, a handsome annual pension is allowed them, which only terminates with their death,—just as if they had served a sufficient number of years in some Government office to establish a legal claim to a retiring pension. I need hardly say that this fact has a great moral influence in regard to those

gentlemen who are on the literary department of the *Times*. They are all proud to be able to say that they are connected with that journal; but the certainty that if they conduct themselves in every respect in such a way as to establish a moral claim to the handsome retiring allowance made to its able and faithful servants when circumstances render their relinquishment of their position necessary, this allowance will be awarded, exercises a most salutary influence on their conduct during the years of their active service.

The estimation in which the late Mr. Walter was held, may be inferred from the fact that he was chosen representative in Parliament for Berkshire,—the county in which Bearwood, his country seat, was situated. In obtaining that high honour he must have reached the height of his ambition. As member for Berkshire he might have remained till the day of his death, but for a great blunder committed by some of his friends. On a dissolution of Parliament, an opponent appeared, and that opponent had avowed his determination to contest, to the utmost, the seat with the late member. At an important period in the election proceedings, Mr. Walter had occasion to be in London for two or three nights, and therefore he was not in a position to form an opinion from personal investigation as to what the probabilities were with regard to the issue of the contest. On one of these nights he received letters from several private friends, dolefully assuring him that he had not the slightest chance of being re-elected. These injudi-

cious friends had accepted as true statements put in circulation by the supporters of his opponent. Their letters to Mr. Walter were naturally written in the desponding tone which their apprehension, or rather conviction of defeat, necessarily inspired. Being a man of high honour and of that sensitiveness which is almost invariably associated with honourable feelings, he at once, rather than run the risk of defeat, sat down and penned, in the *Times* office, a letter of resignation as candidate for re-election as representative for Berkshire. The letter appeared next morning in the *Times*, and was circulated throughout Berkshire, to the great surprise and deep regret, not only of the constituency, but of the population generally. Well might Mr. Walter, in that case at least, have prayed to be saved from his friends. He was, however, afterwards elected for the borough of Nottingham, which seat he retained until his death in 1847.

I now come back to an event which constitutes not only an era in the history of the *Times*, but in the Newspaper Press of the world. The year of this remarkable occurrence—one which was nothing less than a revolution in journalism—so far as related to its mechanical condition, was 1814. The *Times* had on successive occasions enlarged the size of its sheets, and greatly improved its typographical appearance; but the circulation was so great during the latter period of the War with France, that the mechanical resources of the paper were found to be wholly inadequate to meet the demand, and the con-



sequence was that though the press was kept continually going throughout the day, the sale of thousands of copies, on particular occasions, was lost.

All printing was at this time done by what were called hand-presses, and at most four hundred and fifty copies an hour was regarded as a great feat of manual labour. The consequence was that before 3000 or 4000 copies could have been thrown off the news would have been comparatively old, and the necessity would have come to prepare for the impression of the following day. Under these circumstances Mr. Walter had, for several years, been directing his unceasing attention to the subject, and expending large sums on experiments, with a view to the remedy of this obstacle to the still greater commercial success of his paper. Ultimately his triumph was complete. It would be wanting in good taste to record that great triumph in any other language than Mr. Walter's own. In the *Times* of the 29th November, 1814, Mr. Walter, in the first leading article in the impression of that day, thus writes:—

#### THE FIRST NEWSPAPER PRINTED BY STEAM.

Our journal of this day presents to the public the practical results of the greatest improvement connected with printing, since the discovery of the art itself. The reader of this paragraph now holds in his hands one of the many thousand impressions of the *Times* newspaper which were taken off last night by a mechanical apparatus.

A system of machinery, almost organic, has been devised

and arranged, which, while it relieves the human frame of its most laborious efforts in printing, far exceeds all human powers in rapidity and despatch. That the magnitude of the invention may be justly appreciated by its effects, we may inform the public that after the letters are placed by the compositors, and inclosed in what is called the "form," little more remains for man to do than to attend upon and watch this unconscious agent in its operations. The machine is then merely supplied with paper. Itself places the form, inks it, adjusts the paper to the newly-inked type, stamps the sheet, and gives it forth to the hands of the attendant, at the same time withdrawing the form for a fresh coat of ink, which itself again distributes, to meet the ensuing sheet, now advancing for impression; and the whole of these complicated acts is performed with such a velocity and simultaneousness of movement, that no less than 1100 sheets are impressed in one hour. That the completion of an invention of this kind, not the effect of chance, but the result of mechanical combinations, methodically arranged in the mind of the artist, should be attended with many obstructions and much delay, may be readily admitted. Our share in the event has, indeed, only been the application of the discovery, under an agreement with the patentees, to our own particular business; yet few can conceive, even with this limited interest, the various disappointments and deep anxiety to which we have, for a long course of time, been subjected. Of the persons who made this discovery, we have but little to add. Sir Christopher Wren's noblest monument is to be found in the building which he erected; so is the best tribute of praise which we are capable of offering to the inventor of the printing machine, comprised in the description which we have feebly sketched, of the powers and utility of the invention. It must suffice to say further, that he is a Saxon by birth; that his name is König; and that the invention has been executed under the direction of his friend and countryman Banar.

"We have now before us," says the same writer,

“two consecutive numbers of the *Times*—the last that was printed at the hand-press (November 28th, 1814), and the first that was printed by machinery (November 29th); the latter is far clearer and more legible than the former—possibly because a new fount of type was used. König’s machine was, however, very complicated, and was soon after superseded by one invented by Messrs. Applegarth and Cowper. Four thousand, six thousand, eight thousand impressions per hour were printed, as gradual improvements were made in the apparatus; until at length Hoe’s machine now as much exceeds Applegarth and Cowper’s in efficacy and rapidity as that did König’s.”

This announcement in the *Times* created, as might have been expected, a great sensation in all parts of the country. Men were equally surprised and delighted by it. It was at once seen to be the advent of a new era in newspaper history. The pressmen on the *Times* were naturally indignant, because they believed that their occupation would be gone by this new application of steam power. But while, as has been stated in the above quotation, Mr. Walter, who was a man of will as well as the possessor of other qualities, intimated to them that if they showed any disposition to carry out in practice their hostile feelings, a sufficient force would be called in to suppress any riotous conduct they might show, he at the same time redeemed his promise, that if they offered no resistance to the new principle of steam, none of them should lose their employment in Printing House Square. This had

the desired effect, and from that day till this, now upwards of half a century, the *Times* has been printed by steam machinery. All the other morning papers, and the principal country ones as well, have been printed by the same process. Since then very great improvements have been made in the printing machinery of the *Times*. Years of labour, and large sums of money, have been spent both by the father of the present Mr. Walter, and by the present Mr. Walter himself, in seeking still further to improve the capacity of the new system of printing by machinery worked by steam. The experiments which have been made with that view have been crowned with surprising success. It is generally believed that the *Times* is now printed at the rate of from 18,000 to 22,000 copies an hour. The expense, as can easily be believed, of bringing to maturity this system of steam printing was enormously great. I have heard it stated as not falling short, from first to last, of 50,000*l*. I have heard others, indeed, affirm that including the latest improvements and enlargement of the capacity of the machinery, the expenditure could not have been less than 80,000*l*. But no one except the proprietors themselves can know what, in the aggregate, the various experiments have cost.









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